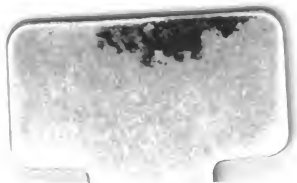




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FLORENTINE HISTORY.

Ma quell' ingrato popolo maligno
Che discese di Fiesole ab antico,
E tiene ancor del monte e del macigno.

DANTE, *Inferno*, Canto xv.

E come 'l volger del ciel della luna
Cuopre ed iscuopre i liti senza posa,
Così far di Fiorenza la fortuna :

Perchè non dee parer mirabil cosa
Ciò ch' io dirò degli alti Fiorentini,
Onde la fame nel tempo è nascosa.

DANTE, *Paradiso*, Canto xvi.

FLORENTINE HISTORY,

FROM THE EARLIEST AUTHENTIC RECORDS

TO THE ACCESSION OF

FERDINAND THE THIRD,

GRAND DUKE OF TUSCANY.



BY

HENRY EDWARD NAPIER,

Captain in the Royal Navy, F.R.S.

IN SIX VOLUMES.

VOL. V.

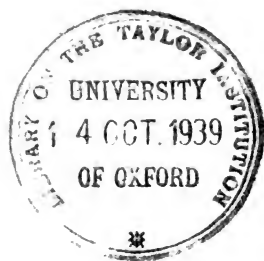
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FRANCIS I. GRAND DUKE OF TUSCANY.

(FROM A.D. 1575 TO A.D. 1587.)

Preamble—Francis I. succeeds—Confines Camilla Martelli—Comparison between him and Cosimo—Dispute continues with Ferrara—Don Pietro de' Medici's infamous character—Cardinal Ferdinand retires from court—Orazio Pucci's conspiracy—Legge Polverina acted on—Francesco's cruelty—Affairs and revolution of Genoa—Aid asked from Francis—His intrigues—Philip's designs on Genoa—Conduct of Gregory XIII.—Duplicity of Francesco—His vigour in opposition to Don John of Austria—Shows Cosimo's ability—Francesco created grand duke by the emperor Maximilian II.—Festivities in consequence—People regret Cosimo—The ministers and government of Francis—Murder and robbery increase—Robber Condottieri—The plague—Comet—Superstition—Expense of Pratolino—Cruelties—Don Pedro's wickedness—Eleonora de Toledo—Her fate—Donna Isabella de' Medici—Her fate—Death of Giorgio Vasari (*note*)—Bianca Cappello—Her story—Her husband Piero Buonaventuri murdered—Bianca feigns pregnancy—Don Antonio de' Medici—Bianca accused of murder—Employs philtres, &c., magic, and is supposed to be a witch—Maximilian II. dies—Rodolph II. emperor—Complains of the grand duchess—A prince born to her—Francesco's satisfaction—Genoa offers herself to him—Refused—He encourages Leghorn—Attempts to revive the Levant trade—Fails—Don Pietro in Spain—His excesses—Death of the grand duchess Giovanna—Her issue—Quarrels with Cardinal Ferdinand, who attaches himself to the queen-mother of France—She protects the Florentine conspirators—They are murdered by Francesco—Catharine of Medici's vengeance—He thinks of marrying Bianca—Accomplishes it—Childish quarrels with Savoy and Parma—Philip II.'s policy—Affairs of Portugal—Philip borrows money from Francis—Repays in titles—Succours given for the Portuguese war—Death of Don John of Austria—Alexander Farnese governor of Flanders—Francis declares his marriage with Bianca—His infatuation—Conduct of Venice on the occasion—Bianca is adopted by that republic—Rejoicings at Venice and Florence—Vast expense of this marriage—Policy of Venice—An army sent to Philip—Jealousy of Spain and Italy—Cardinal Ferdinand dissatisfied—Accused of an attempt to poison Bianca—Quarrel with Catharine embittered—Its consequences—Another Spanish loan and more troops—Francis offers to equip a fleet—The *Presidj* offered for more money—Refused—Bianca reconciles Francis and Ferdinand—Cardinal d' Este's insolence and turbulence at Rome—He is banished—Ferdinand makes friends with him—Plague—" *Mal di Montone* "—Scarcity—Public discontent—Ministers of Francis—Changed by Bianca and her brother—Robber bands infest the frontier—Leoncello di Spoleto—" The wild man "—Alfonzo Piccolomini—Paulo Giordano Orsini and Vittoria Accoromboni—Francesco Peretti murdered—Conduct of Ferdinand—Secures Cardinal Montalto's friendship—Francis receives the title of highness, and authority over Spanish ministers—Vittori Cappello dismissed—Assumption of new titles in Italy—Disputes with Venice—Death of Prince Philip of Tuscany—Don Pietro consents to marry—Don Antonio's greatness—Francis is disgusted with Spain—Conciliates the pope—Lioncello da Spoleto murdered—Alfonso Piccolomini's pardon refused—He breaks

out afresh—Robbers again abundant—Piccolomini pacified by Francis—Enters the French service—Intermarriages with the houses of Este and Mantua—Audacity of the robbers—Hired as body-guards by the cardinals—Philip II. keeps fast hold of Tuscany—Dissimulation of Francis and Ferdinand—Bianca interferes in politics—Don Pietro at Florence—Col. Dovara—Tuscan ministry—Death of Gregory XIII.—Sixtus V. (Peretti) elected by Ferdinand of Medici's influence—His character—Death of Paulo Giordano Orsini—Murder of Vittoria Accoromboni—Virginia de' Medici's nuptials—Camilla Martelli in public—Consequences—Crown of Poland offered to Francis and refused—His mean conduct—Court at Poggio-a-Caiano—Death of Francis and Bianca—Consequent proceedings of Ferdinand—His want of magnanimity as regarded Bianca—Her character—Issue of Francis I.—His character—Public feeling—Ridicule—Petitions—Observation on monarchs—Bianca's influence over Francis—Character of his reign—His ministers and their character—Government of Siena—Court of Florence—Cotemporary monarchs

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CHAPTER VII.

FERDINAND I. GRAND DUKE OF TUSCANY.

(FROM A.D. 1587 TO A.D. 1609.)

Degradation of the citizenship—Spanish manners and court nobility—Rigour of fiscal regulations—Robber bands increase—Severities against them—Pope's intrigues—Repelled by Francis—Dexterity of the priesthood—Disputes with the pope—The nuns of Barga rebel—Other encroachments of the pope—Francis is firm—Bad effects of papal interference—Bishops adhere to Rome—More evil consequences—The Jesuits of Siena—Monks of Saint Mark—Savonarola's memory—Apprehensions in consequence—Suffering of the nuns—Vexatious conduct of the Inquisition—"Crocesegnati"—Francesco's expenses—Decline of trade—Observations on it—Ruin of Lyon as a money market—Besançon and Chambery—Changed line of commerce—Pepper trade—Spanish loans unsafe—Bankruptcies—Cruel laws against them—Consequences—English encouraged at Leghorn—Tuscan alum trade unshackled in England—Francis a merchant and shopkeeper himself—Raw silk trade—White mulberry cultivation—Treasure left by Francis—Bad government of Siena—Agriculture revives in Florence—Laws on this subject—Tunny fishery at Elba—Mines, minerals, &c.—Arts, artists, and literature—Academy della Crusca—Its war on Tasso—Urged on by Francis—Universities of Siena and Pisa—*Cisalpine* acquainted with the circulation of the blood—General hatred to Francis—Wherefore Ferdinand was generally welcomed—His assumption of the throne—Begins well and popularly at home and abroad—State of Europe—Foreign feelings towards Tuscany—His home and foreign policy—His ministry—His enmity to Bianca's memory—Meanness of Venice—Ferdinand determines to marry—Spain's wrath augmented—Philip courts him—Don Pedro at Florence—Catharine offers Saluzzo to Tuscany—Occupied by Savoy—Henry III. at Blois—His distress—Ferdinand befriends him—Resigns the cardinalship—Spain's anger—Genoa and Sixtus V. unite with him—Philip's revenge—Murder of Guise—Death of Catharine of Medici—Her qualities—Galuzzi's character of her—Her rights in Urbino bequeathed to Christina of Lorraine—Her marriage with Ferdinand—Weak state of Henry III.—Conduct of the Huguenots—She

embarks at Marseilles—State of that city—Marriage and rejoicings at Florence—Conduct of Philip II.—Policy of Ferdinand—Murder of Henry III.—Annoyance caused by Philip to Ferdinand—Leghorn again improved—Ferdinand adheres to Henry of Navarre—Persuades Sixtus V. to join—Anger of Olivarez and Spain—Persecution of Ferdinand by Philip II.—Piccolomini engaged against him—The latter and Marco Sciarra defeated—Hanged at Florence—Ferdinand supplies corn to Italy—A son born—His beneficence on this event—Death of Sixtus V.—Fear of him at Rome—Succession of Urban VII.—Gregory XIV.—Innocent IX. and Clement VIII. (Aldobrandini)—His qualities—General famine continues—Beccaria's dogma reversed—Ferdinand gains possession of Iff—Battle of Ivry—Henry IV.'s intentions—Clement VIII.'s views and instructions to his legate at Paris—Philip's objects—Florentine ministry—Distress and turbulence of Tuscany—Ferdinand's improvements and attempts to abate the evil—Philip's demands of the pope—Of Ferdinand—More annoyances, in which Don Pietro joins—Communications between France, Tuscany, and Rome—Gondi's mission to France stopped—Cardinal of Toledo supports Ferdinand and Henry IV.—Correspondence between Henry IV. and Ferdinand about a change of religion—The king renounces his heresy—Remarks on this—Rodolph II.'s conduct—Promises Piombino to Ferdinand—Tuscan succours against the Turks—Ferdinand's efforts for Henry IV.—Pride of popes and cardinals—Cardinal of Saint George and his debating society—Attempts to murder Henry IV. proceed from it—French affairs—Henry reconciled to the church, principally by Ferdinand's efforts—Internal government of Tuscany—Spanish proceedings—Casau, tyrant of Marseilles—His conduct and views—Ferdinand's duplicity—He expostulates with Casau—Resolves to have him killed—Plot—Death of Casau—Its consequences—Iff fires on the Spanish galleys—Villeroi's advice to Ferdinand—Don Pietro driven from Madrid—Ferdinand misunderstands Henry's politics—Is dissatisfied, and resolves to be reconciled to Spain—Determines to keep Iff—Its importance—Giovanni de' Medici defends it—Coolness with Henry IV.—Death of Alfonso last Duke of Ferrara—Clement VIII. claims that duchy for the church—Don Cesar d'Este driven from it by excommunication—Shameful conduct of Ferdinand and Henry IV.—Ferrara in possession of the church—Clement aspires to the conquest of Tuscany—Ferdinand prepares for defence—The pope's duplicity—The design doubted by Ossat—His opinion of Ferdinand's views—Ferdinand consents to restore Iff to Henry IV.—Peace of Vervins—All Europe exhausted—State of Spain—France—England, Holland, Italy, Venice, Genoa, Rome—Saluzzo to be given to Savoy—Tuscany comparatively prosperous—Leghorn flourishes—Philip II. dies—Philip III. governed by Lerma—Death of Margaret of Anjou—Mary of Medicis destined to marry Henry IV.—Discussions about dowry—Sully's advice—Princess Mary's marriage and voyage to France—Saluzzo given to Savoy by the treaty of Lyon—Discontent of Italy—Ferdinand remonstrates—Villeroi's reply—Ferdinand turns in disgust to Spain—Arrests the impostor Don Sebastian—Humbles himself to Spain—Fears her troops—Entreats Henry's aid—Reassured by that king—Fuentes' annoyances—Insurrection in Lunigiana—Plot to assassinate Henry—Detected by Ferdinand—Death of the last Appiano—Ferdinand more humble to Spain—Porto Lungone built—Intrigues of the Spanish Queen—Death of Don Pietro—Siena promised—Treaty of marriage commenced between Spain and Tuscany—Character of Charles Emanuel of Savoy—Conduct of the various powers—Proposed marriage of Henry Prince of Wales to a Tuscan princess—Squabbles at the French court—The Grand

Duke angry with Mary—Sully his enemy—Spanish usurpations in Italy—Alarm in consequence—Death of Clement VIII.—Leo XI. (Medici) succeeds—Dies—Paul V. (Borghese)—His quarrel with Venice—Paulo Sarpi—James I.'s indecision—English enjoy peculiar privileges in Tuscany—Ferdinand shares their prizes—Book published by Edward Blount against Tuscans—Expeditions against Infidels—Ferdinand acquires Pitigliano—Prince Cosimo marries Maddalena Archduchess of Austria—Rejoicings—Victory of the Tuscan galleys—Death of Ferdinand I.—His government and character—Anecdote—His issue—Intentions for them—His ministers and policy—His manners and general popularity—Cotemporary monarchs

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CHAPTER VIII.

COSIMO II. GRAND DUKE OF TUSCANY.

(FROM A.D. 1609 TO A.D. 1621.)

Ferdinand I.'s conduct to his ministers—Machinery of his government—Superficial improvement in society and morals—Ecclesiastical encroachments—Bishop of Montepulciano's insolence—Property swallowed up by the priesthood—Its legality tried—"Non Conferenti"—Three-fourths of Tuscany in possession of the church—The senate and lawyers differ—Niccolo di Giunta's argument—Ferdinand is timid—The senate divided, and the church succeeds—Consequences—More vigorous in his management of Leghorn—His engineering projects and works—Unlucky management of the Senese state—Real improvements—Colonies, corn regulations, &c.—Bad legislation—Bad political economy—Usinbardi Bishop of Arezzo's advice—Scarcities attract capital to agriculture from trade—The former generally favoured—White mulberry—Gardening—Botany—Ferdinand traded privately—Monopolized the corn trade—Had banks in the principal places of Europe—Contraband trade with America—His vast wealth—Change and new course of trade—Transit trade through France proposed—Sully against it—Raw silk trade—Manufactures—Banking—Forced trade—Introduction of the "*Cacao*" nut by Carletti—Police of artists "*Pietre dure*"—Mausoleum of San Lorenzo—Invention of the Italian Opera—Jacopo Peri—Observation—Moore quoted—"La *Dafne*" by Rinuccini—The "*Euridice*"—"L'*Arianna*"—Cavaliere, Caccini, called Giulio Romano—Medicine—Mathematics and engineering—Fantoni—Ricci—Buontalenti—Lorini—Altoni Lupicini—Ughi—Pieroni—Galileo—He retires to Padua—Recalled—Manuscripts—Remarks—Difference between Cosimo I. and II.—Injustice of Henry IV. to Cosimo II.—Weakness and policy of Spain—Princess Claudia affianced to the Prince of Urbino—Jupiter's satellites discovered by Galileo—Cosimo tries to make a league against Turkey—State of France—Cosimo a mediator between France and Spain—Maria of Medicis crowned—Henry IV. murdered—Different feelings of different courts—Remark—State of Austria—Queen Mary regent of France—Her light unfeeling character—Louis XIII.—Paul Sarpi's observation on Henry's murder—Concini's exaltation—Becomes Marquis d'Ancre—Sully's conduct—Anecdote of Mary—France and Spain united by a double marriage—Prince Henry of England destined for a Medician princess—The queen's acknowledgment about religion—The transaction checked by Cardinal Bellarmine and stopped by Prince Henry's death—Ranuccio Farnese Duke of Parma—His tyranny—A conspiracy—Cosimo's sarcasm—Disputed succes-

sion of Mantua—Savoy's decided conduct—General alarm—Tuscany and Venice send succours to Mantua—Cosimo's decision—Savoy brought to reason by Spain—Pope incensed—Cosimo submits—Victories of the Tuscan galleys—Sir Robert Dudley in Tuscany—His naval architecture—Changes in the ministry—Vinta, Picchena, Cioli—Death of Francesco de' Medici—Cosimo III.—Quarrel of Austria with Venice about the "*Uscocchi*"—Cosimo hampered by Milan—Complicated warfare—Great power of viceroys—Ingherami commander of the Tuscan galleys makes successful war—Negotiations for a matrimonial union with Philip III.—Caterina de' Medici marries the Duke of Mantua—Concini murdered at Paris—Eleanora executed—Queen Mary confined—Luines the favourite—Peace of Madrid—Toledo and Ossuna act independently of their court—Duke of Feria at Milan—Ossuna and Bedmar's conspiracy at Venice—Doubted—General agitation in Europe—Succours sent to Austria—Queen Mary of Medicis escapes—Assisted by Cosimo II.—His duplicity—His reconciliation with Louis XIII.—Ferdinand II. emperor—Ambition of Savoy and Cosimo's jealousy—Religious war against the Grisons—Its cruelty—Death of Paul V.—Gregory XV. (Ludovico)—Death of Cosimo II.—His character—Country flourishing—The regency—His will—Its utility—His brothers and sisters—His issue—Cotemporary monarchs Page 393 to 423

CHAPTER IX.

FERDINAND II. GRAND DUKE OF TUSCANY.

(FROM A.D. 1621 TO A.D. 1637.)

Folly of the regentesses—Their ministry—Bad government—Church influence—Extravagance—Princess Claudia married to the Prince of Urbino—Territory, and advantages of Urbino—Death of Don Giovanni de' Medici—Persecution of his widow—Death of Philip III.—Philip IV.—Count-duke Olivarez minister—Valteline war mitigated—Regentesses try to form a league—Valteline war continued—Second marriage with Urbino—That duchy claimed by the church—Death of Gregory XV.—Urban VIII. (Barberini) succeeds—His character—Intrigues to gain Urbino—Richelieu occupies the Valteline—State of European politics—Claudia of Urbino marries the Archduke Leopold—France and Savoy invade Genoa—Consequences—The Grisons quieted—Affairs of Mantua—Weakness of Tuscan government—Death of Vincenzo Duke of Mantua—Its consequences—Ferdinand II. travels—Assumes the government—His sister Margaret marries Duke Este of Parma—Finds the treaty of Siena onerous—Refuses succours to Milan—Courts Richelieu—Vigour of this minister—Invades Savoy—Austria occupies Mantua—Ferdinand's neutrality—Female influence—War, pestilence, and famine—Precautions—Ferdinand's inexperience and wavering conduct—French in Piedmont—Mantua taken and cruelly ravaged by Austria—Decline of Tuscany—Plague in Florence—Barbarity of the church—Gustavus Adolphus—Duke of Orleans' conspiracy—Affairs of Germany and Savoy—Death of Walstein—Of Gustavus Adolphus—Treaty of Chierasco—Consequences—Duke of Urbino dies—Consequences to Tuscany and Rome—Death of Grand Duchess Maria Maddalena—The plague again at Florence—Galileo before the Inquisition—Universal persecutions—Milton visits Galileo at Arcetri—Duke of Lorraine a fugitive at Florence—Ferdinand marries his cousin Vittoria d'Urbino—Death of Francesco de' Medici—Affairs of France—Richelieu courts Tuscany—

Maintains his neutrality—Tries to form a league in Italy—Ferdinand's policy—Title of Highness—Loans to Spain—Richelieu dissatisfied—Urban VIII. inimical to Tuscany—Ferdinand II. assumes the whole government—Christina dies—Her character—Affairs of Parma—Observation on government—Changes and character in that of Tuscany under the regentesses—Vanity of monarchs, and aristocratic feeling in Florence—Pernicious effects—"Lance Spezzate"—"Fra Paulo"—Story of Caterina Caracci—Ferocity prevalent—Assisted by the church—Bull of Gregory XV.—Sanctuary—Sir Robert Dudley's attempt—Prince Cosimo's surprise at Irish misery—Influence and church population augment—Commerce—Monte di Pietà—Leghorn—Pisa—Cost of the navy—Grand Dukes cease their private merchandise after Ferdinand I.—Courtly extravagance—Bad laws—Agriculture declines—Board of agriculture—Its evils—Arts and literature—Public taste declines—Palazzo Pitti—Summary of the state of Tuscany under the minority and early years of Ferdinand II.—Cotemporary monarchs Page 424 to 458

CHAPTER X.

FERDINAND II. GRAND DUKE OF TUSCANY.

(FROM A.D. 1637 TO A.D. 1670.)

Success of France in Piedmont, &c.—Ecclesiastical troubles in Tuscany—Insolence of the Barberini and other factions at Rome—Duke of Parma visits Castro—Hostility of Pope Urban VIII. to Ferdinand II.—Audacity of the priesthood—Strange character of Urban VIII.—He quarrels with Lucca—Successes of France—Fears of Italy—Weakness of Spain—She loses Portugal—Catalonia revolts—Her losses—State of Piedmont—Conduct of the Barberini—Affairs of Castro—League in its defence—Offers of Spain to Ferdinand—The Duke of Parma excommunicated—Tuscan army under Prince Mathias de' Medici—Spanish and Portuguese ambassadors fight at Rome—Duke of Parma invades the church states—His success—Not supported—Negotiations—Cunning of the Barberini—Death of Galileo—Birth of Newton—Death of Richelieu and Louis XIII.—Cardinal Mazzerino minister—New league against the Barberini—War of Castro prosecuted with fresh vigour—Tuscan army—Città della Pieve taken—Other successes—Ferdinand's vigour—Don Mathias defeats the papal army at Castel San Giovino—Its consequence—Pistoia attacked—Second victory of Tuscans at Pitigliano—Ferdinand's army 20,000 strong—Venetians beat the papal army at "Lago Scuro"—Peace concluded—Moderation of the league—Death of Urban VIII.—Joy of Italy at this event—The conclave—Election of Innocent X. (Pamfili)—Adheres to Spain and Tuscany—Giovann Carlo de' Medici made a cardinal—Donna Olympia—Power of the Barberini—Barberini persecuted—Mazzerino menaces Spain and Tuscany—The "Presidj" offered to Ferdinand and refuses—Offers of France to him—He declares Tuscany neutral—San Stefano taken by France—Orbitello besieged—French evacuate Tuscany—Conduct of Innocent X.—Restores the Barberini by Donna Olympia's influence—Congress of Munster—Piombino and Lungone taken by France—Intrigues and renewed offers of France to Ferdinand—Tuscan galleys sold to France—Suffering state of Tuscany—Office of abundance—Ecclesiastical annoyances—Fears of plague—Agitated state of Italy—Death of Lorenzo de' Medici—Ferdinand is reconciled with Spain—The pope's views on Castro—Ferdinand's bad conduct—Weakness of Parma—Castro cruelly

destroyed by Innocent X.—Castro occupied by the church on conditions—Pontremoli purchased from Spain by Ferdinand—Present to Don Louis de Haro—Philip—Keeps it for himself—Medician intrigue and acquisitions in Lunigiana—Alteration of manners at Florence—Improved state of Spain—Medician influence at Rome—Death of Innocent X.—Intrigues of conclave—"Squadron Volante"—Alexander VII. (*Chigi*)—Troubles in Lombardy—Alexander unfriendly to the Medici—Christina of Sweden at Rome—Her conduct—Ferdinand reconciled with the Barberini—Ferdinand and Leopold encourage literature and philosophy—Platonic academy—*Conversazione Filosofica*—Its principal members—*Accademia del Cimento*—Its nature, &c.—Prince Cosimo's bad education—His marriage with Margaret Louisa of Orleans—Her character—The pope quarrels with France—Castro incorporated with the church—Conduct of Margaret Louisa—Louis XIV. determines to chastise the pope—His offers to Tuscany—Death of Giovan Carlo de' Medici—Congress of Pisa—Castro disincorporated—Humiliation of Alexander VII.—Reflections—Extravagant conduct of Margaret Louisa—Tranquillity encourages commerce, the arts, &c.—Softens manners—Spain—France restless—England—Germany—Her demands on Italy—Death of Alexander VII.—Clement IX. (*Rospigliosi*)—Leopold de' Medici made cardinal—Wrecks of the "*Cimento*"—Margaret Louisa again breaks out—Princess Anna born—Prince Cosimo travels—Death of Clement IX.—Clement X. (*Altieri*) elected—Death of Ferdinand II.—His character and that of his reign—Ministers—His brother associated in the government—Leopold's popularity—Ecclesiastical abuses—Power of the Inquisition—"Auto da Fe"—The story of Pandolfo Ricasoli—His terrible sentence—Father Marius blamed—Supported by Rome—Expelled by Ferdinand—Consequences of ecclesiastical ambition—Taxes—Salt tax—The wool trade—Remarks—Unsound opinions on trade—Pernicious maxims—Artificial incubation introduced—Silk trade—Demand from England—Restrictive laws—Retaliation—Consequent evil—Agriculture weak—State commissions to Siena—Useless—Population of Senese provinces—Government of that duchy—Division of its territory—Its general decay—Ferdinand's attempts at improvement—Canals, &c., made—The true remedy understood, but too costly—Since accomplished—Leghorn prosperous—Taken by strangers as a sample of all Tuscany—Treaty with Muscovy—Attempts to reëstablish the Turkey trade under Austrian colours—Partly successful—Cotemporary monarchs Page 459 to 505

CHAPTER XI.

COSIMO III. GRAND DUKE OF TUSCANY.

(FROM A.D. 1670 TO A.D. 1723.)

Cosimo III. ascends the throne—He is not improved by travel—Extravagance commences—State of Europe as regarded Tuscany—Cosimo's first acts—Giovanni Gastone born—Grand Duchess Margaret again troublesome—She retires to a French convent—Regretted at Florence—Captivates the court of France—Death of Cardinal Leopold—Temper and qualities of Cosimo—Death of Clement X.—Innocent XI. (*Odiscalchi*) elected—Treaty of Nimeguen—Cosimo's vanity—Covets Lorraine—Affairs of that duchy—Cosimo's pusillanimity—His mode of action—His ministers—Magalotti's opinion—Cosimo wants to have royal honours—Enfeebled by bad education—Priestly influence—And insolence—Promotes art by advice of Redi and

others—Adorns the Florentine gallery—Venus of Medicis and other statues—Museum of natural history—Literature flourishes—Prince Ferdinand's education—"Accademia della Crusca"—Grand Duchess's conduct in France—Prospects of Europe—The emperor tries in vain to form an Italian league—Cosimo courts Louis XIV.—The Grand Duchess again annoying—Her declarations—Fate of Lorenzini—Prince Ferdinand opposes Cosimo—Supported by the youth of Florence—Prince Francis joins him—Their conduct and its consequences—Spy-system of the priesthood—The Grand Duchess's reprehensible conduct—Ambition of Louis XIV.—Feeling against him—Progress of the Turks—The pope's weakness as a temporal prince—Cosimo resolves on neutrality—Genoa bombarded—Succours against the Turks—Cosimo's plan—Vienna besieged by them—Sobieski's victory—League against the Turks—Santa Maura and Prevesa taken—French success alarms Italy—Cosimo's timid policy—Prince Ferdinand wishes to travel—State of Venetian society—"Virtuosi"—Marriage proposed between Ferdinand and Violante of Bavaria—The Grand Duchess still persecutes Cosimo, who enlists Père la Chaise on his side—Prince Ferdinand married—Expense and rejoicings—Gate near San Gallo reopened—Louis threatens Italy—James II. expelled from England—Venice afraid of Turkey—Cosimo fears for Tuscany—Waste of public revenue prevents defence—Plague of spies and priests—Cosimo fears his son—Reform—Difficulty of managing Ferdinand—Alarm of Italy at Louis—The pope's calmness—He dies—Alexander VIII. (Ottobuoni)—Avignon restored—Alliance against France—Victor Amadeus of Savoy—Courtied by Austria—Jealousy of Cosimo—Marriage of the Princess Anne to the Palatine—Kingly honours accorded to Cosimo—Louis XIV. threatens to bombard Leghorn—Its neutrality often violated—Proposals for guaranteeing its neutrality—The Emperor Leopold levies contributions in Italy—Cosimo remonstrates—Death of Alexander VIII.—Innocent XII. (Pignatelli) elected—The Grand Duchess's proceedings—More imperial demands—Caraffa's advice—Clamours of Tuscany—New taxes—Advice of Louis XIV. to the Italian princes—Remark on the Italian character—State of Italy between France and Austria—Plan of Louis to unite them—Treats with Cosimo—More Austrian demands—Misery of Tuscany—Extravagance of Cosimo—Victory of Orbazzano—Tumults at Florence—Terrible condition of Tuscany—Cardinal of Medicis at Siena—Tries in vain to ameliorate that province—Giovann-Gastone—His life and character as a youth—His ill-assorted marriage to Anna Maria of Saxony—Treaty of Ryswick—Pretensions of the Emperor to Italy revived—Edict at Rome—Energy of the pope—Prince Gaston's domestic quarrels and misery—Prospect of Spanish succession—Wretched state of that country—Another attempt at an Italian league again fails—European projects about Spain—Cosimo at Rome—His bigotry—Death of Innocent XII.—Clement XI. (Albani) elected—Death of King Charles II. of Spain—Philip of Anjou succeeds him—Cosimo acknowledges Philip V.—Cosimo and Austria friends—Gaston's quarrels—Anglo-Dutch fleet in the Mediterranean—Austria angry with Cosimo, and threatens him—Gaston at Florence—Death of the Emperor Leopold—Joseph I.—Battle of Turin gained by Eugene—Its results in Italy—Gloomy prospects of Tuscany—Cardinal Francesco married to Eleonora Gonzaga—Severe winter—King of Denmark in Florence—Views of France, Spain, and Austria on Tuscany—Settlement of Charles V.—Cosimo's views and conclusions—Rinuccini sent to Holland with his demands—Claims of Louis XIV. and Farnese to Tuscany—England and Holland support Cosimo's views—Austria's imperiousness—Views of France—

Death of Cardinal Francesco—Of Joseph I.—European politics altered by it—Charles VI. emperor—War of succession continues—Charles VI. claims Florence as an Imperial fief—The extinction of the Medici eagerly watched by every state—Views of the Electress Anne—Cosimo appeals to the German electors against Charles VI.—His anger—Demands supplies and quarters for troops—Conciliation—Proposals—Congress of Utrecht—Demands of Italy—And Cosimo—Jealousy of Austria—“*Presidj*” given to Austria—Siena to Spain, and declared indivisible from Florence—Death of Prince Ferdinand—His qualities—Remark—Cosimo assembles the Florentine senate—His acts ratified by them, and their nature—Anger of Austria—Imperial claims to Florence—Answered through the Palatine—Peace of Utrecht—Congress of Radstadt—Philip V. marries Elizabeth Farnese—Peace of Baden between France and Austria—Liebnitz employed against Tuscany—Cosimo courts George I.—Death of Louis XIV.—His policy—Austria conciliates Italy—Cosimo negotiates cautiously with the Emperor—Electress Palatine at Florence—Violante governess of Siena—Cosimo suspicious of Austria—Secret proposal of England—Cardinal Alberoni’s vigour and ambitious projects—Duke of Savoy king of Sicily—Plan of general pacification—Quadruple alliance—Alberoni a gardener’s son—Dubois a village apothecary—The power of these ministers—Sicily given to Austria—Sardinia to Savoy—Tuscany settled on Don Carlos of Spain, and made a fief of the empire—Injustice to Cosimo, from whom the treaty is kept secret—Spain rejects it—Cosimo and the nation indignant—His remonstrances—Are vain—Consequences if Spain did not acquiesce—Deplorable state of Cosimo—His energy and protest—Holland opposed to the injustice—Plans proposed by France—Austria, Savoy, Bavaria, England—The Prince of Ottobiano’s claim—The pope’s—Tyranny of Austria—Vexations—Accession of Spain to the treaty of London—Congress of Cambray—Spain and Tuscany act together—Demands of the various powers—Cosimo’s manifesto—Corsini hold in Cosimo’s defence—Various treaties and marriages—The Electress Anne governs Florence—More liked than Gaston—Death of the Grand Duchess—Doubts and anxiety amongst the allied powers—Death of Clement XI.—Innocent XIII. (Conti) elected—Dubois a cardinal—Charles VI. tries to excite Gaston to rise—Opening of the Congress at Cambray—Cosimo protests—Memorial from the Electress—Final protest by Cosimo—His death—His character and reign—Remarks—Character of his reign continued—Comparative energy of the first and last Cosimo—Character of his reign continued—Magalotti and Bassetti—Remark—Legislation—Story of Robert Acciaiuoli and Elizabetta Mormori—Forced marriages—Hypocrisy—Licentiousness of priests—Schools by Cosimo—His motives—Monks augment—Consequences—Proselytism—Criminal regulations—Executions—Sale of places—General misrule—Inquisition—Excommunications—Ecclesiastical insolence—Cardinals Nerli and Fabbri—Cause of Cosimo’s submission to Rome—Anton-Maria Fede—False reputation of Cosimo III.—His annual gifts—Redi’s “*Bacco in Toscana*”—Splendour of Cosimo’s court—People oppressed for it—Uncultivated lands—Expatriation—Miserable state of industry—Trade of Leghorn in foreign hands—Attention to arts and sciences—Magliabecchi—Monks all paramount—Galileo’s name execrated—His followers persecuted—Effect of Cosimo’s reign, and character on Tuscany—Contemporary monarchs Page 506 to 566

CHAPTER XII.

GIOVAN-GASTONE, GRAND DUKE OF TUSCANY.

(FROM A.D. 1723 TO A.D. 1737.)

Gaston disinclined to ambition—Reforms—Abolishes pensions—Discourages spies—Sociable disposition—Excludes his sister—Favours Violante—Change of court manners and costume—Foreign manners obtain in Italy—The ministry—Protest of Cambray renewed—Defences strengthened—John Gaston's policy—Private acquisitions of the Medici—Philip V. abdicates—Louis succeeds—Other political events—Jealousy of England and Holland about the Ostend company of Austria—Spain and Austria dispute about Tuscany—Benedict XIII. favours Gaston—Death of King Louis of Spain—Philip V. reassumes the throne—Treaty of Vienna between Spain and Austria—Tuscan succession—Congress dissolved—Cosimo's protest renewed—Consequences—Treaty between France, England, Prussia, and Holland—Gaston attends to his people—Gaiety of Princess Violante and the court—Public burdens lightened—Gaston's aversion to capital punishments—The country begins to revive—Violante's qualities—Extemporaneous poetry—Bernardo Peretti poet laureate—The "*Ruspanti*"—Licentiousness of Gaston—His justice, mercy, and popularity—New projects for the Tuscan succession—Illness of Gaston—Imperial edict—Gaston's remonstrance—Negotiations—Plans of Spain and Austria—Second Congress of Cambray and Soissons—Various views about Tuscany—Final proposition of Congress—Queen of Spain all powerful—Her policy as regarded Tuscany—Armament at Cadiz—Negotiations at Seville between Spain and England—Padre Ascanio—Treaty of Seville between France, Spain, and England—Its consequences to Tuscany—Presented to Gaston—He continues firm—Austria dissents—Movement of troops—Gaston ordered to receive the investiture of Siena at Milan—Gaston negotiates on all sides—Consequences of all this—Gaston partially gives way—Negotiations—Gaston abandons public affairs in despair to his ministers—Giuliano Dami—His qualities and influence—Licentiousness—Two parties at Florence—International communication more common under Gaston—Death of Benedict XIII.—Clement XI. (Corsini) elected—Gaston receives the investiture of Siena by proxy—Deemed an act of war—Consequences—Tuscany declared free from hostilities—Negotiations recommenced—A lull—Duke of Parma dies, and Austria occupies that state—Treaty between England and Austria—Its nature—Gaston sacrificed—Death and character of Violante—Difficulties of Gaston—He treats directly with Spain—Austria opposes this "Convention of Florence" along with the other powers—Gaston's despair and consequent acts—Character of England by Botta—A Spanish fleet and army, and an English squadron arrive at Leghorn—Consequent proceedings—The people glad—Austria's assurances—Arrival of Don Carlos—Proceedings at Parma—A medal struck—Austria's enmity to Don Carlos—The latter acknowledged "*Grand Prince of Tuscany*"—Austria's anger and insolent conduct at Florence—Its consequence—Disputes between Spain and Austria—Death of the King of Poland—Consequences—A Spanish army disembarked at Leghorn—Surprise of Gaston—His helpless state—General consternation and distress—Parties at Florence—Padre Ascanio's insolent act—State of Europe—Of Austria—General alarm—Austrian army in Lombardy—Its objects—Villars

opposes them—Don Carlos marches on Naples—Disorders at Florence—Naples occupied—Gaston demands another successor from Spain—Austrians defeated at Parma by France—The “*Presidj*”—Gaston’s helplessness—Views and conduct of the various powers—Mantua besieged by Spain and the allies—Preliminaries of peace—Kept secret—Progress of the war in Italy—Gaston’s complaints unheeded—Armistice between Spain and Austria—Difficulties of a final arrangement—Duke of Lorraine resigns his duchy for Tuscany—Grief of Florence—Government neglected—Disorders—Consequences—Deplorable state of everything—An Austrian army occupies Tuscany, and Stanislaus takes Lorraine—The Duke of Lorraine invested with the succession of Tuscany—Other arrangements—Death of John Gaston, the last Medician Duke of Tuscany—The Prince of Craon assumes the government—Agreement with the Electress—Her death, and end of the Medician dynasty—Remarks on it—Recapitulation—Gaston’s character—Changed by misfortune—Augustan age of Florence—Remarks on it and the Medici—Vice and cruelty of that age—Christianity—The crimes of those times not to be regarded through the medium of modern morals—Cotemporary monarchs . . . Page 567 to 600

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FLORENTINE HISTORY.

BOOK THE THIRD.

CHAPTER I.

FROM MAY 1532 TO JANUARY 1537.

REIGN OF ALESSANDRO DE' MEDICI,

FIRST DUKE OF FLORENCE.

BY the exaltation of Alessandro de' Medici to the dukedom Florence became an established hereditary principality, and must henceforth be spoken of rather in the name of her absolute sovereigns than as a self-acting community. We shall see nevertheless that for a while the pangs of expiring liberty worked with convulsive force, and still give painful interest to the last struggles of her citizens; it is therefore a remarkable epoch, and perhaps one of the most exciting portions of her history: it is the strife of young aspiring despotism with antiquated liberty; the triumph of the former, the destruction of the latter, the tail of that hurricane in which her freedom perished.

Note.—The principality of Florence and the Grand Duchy of Tuscany now become little better than mere provinces and lose all interest as an independent state, therefore the secular miscellaneous chapter will henceforth be discontinued as a separate portion of this work, and its contents be generally interwoven with the narrative.

A prince who mounts the throne amidst broken vows and foreign arms, and who still relies for safety on their support after a war which has ruined and enslaved his country, may feign awhile but is not likely long to rule with justice or moderation; he is the lord of others but a slave himself, the slave of them that put him there: a Sforza might by personal valour usurp a throne or hold it by right of conquest, and afterwards through inclination or policy govern well and wisely, for ambition and just government are compatible; but an insolent and licentious youth of a vindictive spirit and with wrongs to revenge, the evil offspring of an evil race; thus mounting triumphantly on the necks of his countrymen, had he been even of a milder nature than Alexander, could have no feeling short of tyranny. This prince was now about twenty years of age and began his reign with some of those flaring acts of poetical justice and generosity that dazzle for the instant and beget an ephemeral popularity; but he had no honest sense of right: yet he was of a subtle genius and clear decided judgment; was personally brave, gave audience everywhere and often, understood business, was prompt and brief in its despatch, and it rarely happened that any person was refused a hearing in matters of importance. He was familiar and affable with the young; they shared his amusements and he joined their pastimes; he played at "*Palla*" and "*Calcio*" with them*, generally kept them to supper, and had an apartment in his palace constantly at their service whether he were present or not. His most intimate companions were Pandolfo Pucci, the two sons of Baccio Valori, Piero, Vincenzo, Ruberto and Leone Strozzi sons of Filippo, who had been his companions as boys and then treated him more like a fag than an equal: besides

* The "*Palla*" was probably what is now called "*Pallone*" a very ancient and manly game, as old, it is said, as the Romans: the "*Calcio*" was nearly our foot-ball, but more scientific and regulated, and at that

time in great vogue amongst the Florentines. (Vide *Discorso sopra il Giuoco del "Calcio Fiorentino."* Del Puro Accademico Alterato. Giunti, Firenze, 1580.)

these were Giuliano Salviati, Francesco and Jacomo de' Pazzi, and lastly Lorenzo or Lorenzino de' Medici who afterwards murdered him. With all these he lived more as a companion than a sovereign, so much so as to alarm Clement who several times admonished him on the subject. For the graver business of state his principal counsellors were, after the Archbishop of Capua's removal, Francesco Vettori, Ruberto Acciaiuoli, Matteo Strozzi, Ottaviano de' Medici, and Giovanni di Stasis; originally sent to superintend the restoration of ecclesiastical property but afterwards retained in office; and lastly Filippo Strozzi who being only forty-three years old and addicted to pleasure united the employments of counsellor and boon companion to the prince. Filippo was supposed to be the richest private gentleman in Europe, extremely handsome, of a quick and subtle intellect and devoted to enjoyment; but, except Luigi Guicciardini the most unscrupulous and decided advocate for the destruction of national liberty; Luigi thus acted from a desire to efface the recollection of his conduct as gonfalonier in 1527, and Filippo not only because he cared little for any principle of government, but also, as was believed, because under a sovereign prince he would enjoy greater latitude in his pleasures; or as Segni says, "Live free from every tie, and more free from every law, both human and divine"*. The pope hated him, though so near a kinsman, for his and Clarice's conduct in 1527, but still made use of him; nor was he himself so much ambitious of power as of being the favourite of those who held it, in order to escape contributions and with less obstruction indulge appetites which neither age nor sex escaped †.

In December Charles V. was attended at Mantua by Alexander, and both of them joined Clement soon after at Bologna: the principal objects of this meeting were a league in defence of Italy, and also against the Turks who threatened to renew their attack on Austria, besides the convocation of a general council.

* Segni, Lib. v., pp. 325-6.

† Varchi, Lib. xii., p. 322.

The latter Clement would not grant, nor yet give Catharine of Medicis in marriage to the Duke of Milan, which Charles desired in order to stop the contract then in progress between her and the Duke of Orleans. The emperor was desirous of renewing the league in 1530 in such a form that he could leave Italy and especially Milan safe from any attack by France while he got rid of the expense of maintaining an army there*. Clement also desired this, but Venice was averse to a quarrel with Soliman while Francis I. angry and mortified was then inciting the Sultan to attack Austria, and soon after actually united with that power to the great scandal of Christendom†. He hoped to detach the pope by the marriage of Catharine, which was not directly opposed by Charles from a conviction that Francis could never intend to conclude it, and the long-promised union of Alexander with Margaret his natural daughter was so far confirmed that in the following April she passed through Florence on her way to Naples where she was to reside until of a proper age, for she was no more than ten or twelve years old at this epoch but very beautiful‡.

On the first of October 1532, as if to annihilate even the inanimate machinery of freedom the great "*Campana*," that ancient bell, which had so often tolled the Florentine people to glory and to crime, was broken by command of Alexander lest its sound should ever again awaken the great national council! Yet the number of strokes which had jarred on its brazen ring for Medician parliaments might have secured a happier destiny if its known beauty, its excellence and antiquity had not been sufficient§.

Francis I. with his accustomed duplicity while trying to conciliate the pope by a family alliance was through Luigi Alamanni deceitfully promising great things to the Florentine

* Varchi, Lib. xiii., pp. 17-18-25.

† Ibid., p. 25.

‡ Segni, Lib. vi., p. 21.—Ammirato, Lib. xxxi., p. 436.—Nerli, Lib. xi., p. 270.

§ It weighed 22,000lb. Troy, and was

supposed to contain much silver in its composition, which some thought was one of the reasons of its destruction, but none was found. This is a trifle but it marks the spirit of the time.—Varchi, Lib. xiii., p. 9.—Segni, Lib. v.

exiles in favour of liberty : these promises arrested an application that some of them were about making to the emperor, and they soon after engaged in a conspiracy carried on through Count Rosso of Arezzo who was subsequently taken and beheaded at Florence ; but the plot had no other consequence than to give Clement a pretext for still more cruel persecutions *. Towards the end of February Charles succeeded in renewing the defensive league of Italy between the church, empire, the King of the Romans, and all the Italian states, Florence not being named through fear of her banking trade and other French commerce suffering, these being the only real ties that connected her with France. Money was deposited for the levy of troops by each confederate, and placed for that purpose only in two banks selected by Clement and Charles, Don Antonio de Leyva being nominated generalissimo. Charles then quitted Bologna and embarked at Genoa for Spain, after which Alexander who had accompanied him returned to Florence and the pontiff to Rome †. A.D. 1533.

But while these things were passing a circumstance occurred at Florence which partially enlightened the young nobility by proving that they had chosen a master, not a companion, and thus sowing the seeds of future sorrow and disturbance. It was an ancient custom, as Varchi relates, when men of every rank and every age were less idle than in his day ; when they were wholly devoted to letters, arms, merchandise, or some other useful labour, that during the Carnival in order to have some respite from business, some slight recreation and repose, the young men and especially the nobles issued forth in disguise with a large foot-ball, scouring the streets and markets, kicking it into the shops and stalls and against the backs and faces of the citizens, and this so recklessly as to maketh em shut up their counting-houses and join from absolute necessity in the

* Varchi, Lib. xiii., p. 16.

† Segni, Lib. vi., p. 19.—Varchi, Lib. xiii., pp. 25-7.

sport. This custom, continues our author, which can neither be blamed nor praised, like all other things degenerated into evil and finally became a public nuisance ; for rushing forth in rainy weather under streaming spouts and through gutters of mud water and every sort of filth, they with nasty rags, and cloths dipped in dirt or whatever else was near, slashed the faces and persons of all they encountered, soiled and over-set the merchandise exposed for sale, put the green-market into confusion, and generally ended their revels by doing an infinite deal of mischief. Latterly they gave previous notice of their visit by sound of trumpet, so that the tradesmen were prepared and withdrew their most costly goods from such revellers ; but they sometimes violated even the sanctity of churches, pursuing their victims up to the very altar without shame or reverence ! Such was the practical wit of the young Florentine nobles in the sixteenth century.

About Christmas 1532 a bevy of these young men led by Vincenzo and Roberto Strozzi issued from their father's palace and without the accustomed signal rushed straight into the Mercato Nuovo the Calimala and Mercato Vecchio, dashing down and destroying everything, some even availing themselves of their disguise to carry away rich and valuable merchandise. This was of itself out of all reason, but to make bad worse they overtook and insulted Francesantonio Nori one of the supreme council and a member of the "Otto di Balìa ;" an aged and distinguished citizen who ought to have been exempt from such outrage. But Nori was not of a temper to overlook this insolence ; mocked and dirtied he at once assembled the "Otto" and representing to them the danger and injustice of allowing these excesses especially in the duke's absence, immediately issued an order for the young men's arrest and punishment. Many were accordingly taken up, and amongst them the two Strozzi, who presuming on their rank and consequent impunity took no pains to conceal themselves. Their

brother Lione the Prior of Capua met and would have rescued them but was persuaded not to do so by the officer who had them in charge: Filippo, who at the moment happened to be away from Florence, instantly hurrying back endeavoured to treat it as a mere juvenile frolic, and after some time when his agents, had quieted the sufferers, who (such was his popularity) acknowledged no loss although he offered ample compensation; the prisoners were released on condition of making good any damages that might afterwards be claimed against them. This responsibility for bad behaviour and escape from severe chastisement were so unusual amongst Florentine aristocrats that the Strozzi boiled up with indignation against government and too late discovered the real weight of that yoke which they had so easily shouldered*.

The manners of Alexander now became daily more licentious, the popularity he had first gained by attention to business and a rigid, prompt, and to a certain degree impartial administration of justice, was fast wearing away among the citizens, but he still pleased the populace by shows games and a sort of rustic familiarity. Always fearful of his position he built a small fort on the Arno near the Porta di Giustizia, nominally to receive the seized arms, but really as a place of shelter for himself in case of revolt; in May however he began to dig the foundation of a regular citadel, now the fort of San Giorgio the first stone of which was laid in July 1534, and putting a strong body of workmen to the task finished it with great rapidity†. To support him if necessary against the citizens of Florence, he reorganized the rural militia with exclusive privileges and diminished taxation, and afterwards extended it to the cities of Cortona Arezzo Montepulciano Volterra and Pisa, thus making partisans of subject towns by exalting them above the metropolis. Pisa was especially and deservedly favoured, for she had been much trampled on by the republic; the convenience

* Varchi, Lib. xiii., pp. 20-25.

† Ibid., Lib. xiv., pp. 60-85.

of her site for commerce and agriculture was appreciated, and her unmitigated detestation of Florence was no small recommendation to the Medici: besides this his soldiers lived in disorder and impunity, nor could justice be obtained against any individual either of the garrison or ducal household*. Every means were used to crush the spirit of the people, even the citizens who had supported his family with the sacrifice of their character and country were insulted and rebuffed; they had immolated liberty on the altar of a tyrant, yet could not brook the tyranny, nor worship the loathsome image which they themselves had set up.

Guicciardini in his government of Bologna was aloof from the evil; Baccio Valori thought himself slighted and his services not sufficiently rewarded by the presidency of Romagna, wherefore he too began to hate Clement and became patriotic; Filippo Strozzi was not left long unmolested; his popularity riches and influence were too great to be tolerated by a prince who notwithstanding all his power and dignity scarcely equalled him in public opinion and was far inferior in taste and magnificence. Yet Alexander's expenses were necessarily great; they swelled even beyond the revenue, which by fresh imposts was augmented to 400,000 florins in order to meet them. At first he assisted with some regularity at the council board, but soon got tired and carried away by pleasure and the Strozzi, for Filippo was ever devising some new entertainment, he ended by appointing a deputy and rarely attended in person. Under so agreeable a master as Strozzi he ran madly round Florence, and with all his dissolute companions plunged into every debauchery: not contented with what is falsely called legitimate indulgence of passion he outraged the most noble families, and even scaled the convent walls to dishonour their trembling inmates. No place was safe from his violence, nothing impervious to his lust; like Phaeton he seemed to set every-

* Gio. Batista Adriani, *Stor. di suoi Tempi*, Lib. i^o, p. 7.—Segni, *Lib. vi.*, pp. 5-6.

thing in a blaze, and like him too, he fell for his temerity : extravagance and dissipation inflamed the town ; feasts, dances, revels ; suppers costing from 500 to 1000 florins each, man and woman, youth and damsel, were mingled in one wild scene of shameless immorality ! And as if to compensate themselves for recent miseries, for famine plague and war, all Florence now seemed melting under the lascivious glances of this Moorish tyrant and his Bacchanalian crew ! Night after night resounded with such entertainments at which Alexander was invariably present and known although masked, and commonly attended by *L'Unghero* his chamberlain along with *Giomo da Carpi* another minion, both of his own age and educated along with him from infancy. There were few in the city that would not have performed anything however disgraceful to please these favourites who with Piero and Vincenzo Strozzi, Giuliano Salviati, and Pandolfo Pucci, were continually at his side urging him onward in that wild career that so demoralised the Florentine youth of both sexes. Pucci, Ridolfi, and Averardo de' Medici, ran far beyond the rest in all this extravagance but as each wild comrade strove madly for his prince's favour, secret heart-burnings, bad blood, and smouldering hatred soon sprouted amongst them and generated serious political changes which affected the final destiny of Florence *.

Yet amidst all this thoughtless extravagance public affairs were not entirely neglected : the senate and councils still contained a number of grave able and experienced statesmen who though mainly ruled by self-interest nevertheless looked to the due administration of government and the alleviation, as far as suited their own objects, of general misery and public grievances. Fines long due for arrears of taxation were forgiven and defaulters relieved from the penalties of the *Specchio* ; the "Mounts" or public funds and the ordinary tax of the *Decima* which depended greatly on each other, as well as the

* Segni, Lib. vi., p. 19.

"*Arbitrio*," an imposition connected with both, were arranged as usual at the beginning of the year in March, but with more than common attention to nominal justice and impartiality as well as to individual suffering during the war. It would be as needless as uninteresting to enter into all these details, but as the *Decima* has been frequently mentioned some account of that permanent and important tax may be necessary, more especially as regards its connection with the public funds*.

Anterior to the year 1427 all taxes both ordinary and extraordinary were imposed on the persons of the citizens, not on their property: the consequence was that the poor and middle classes bore all the burden while the rich and powerful escaped by the favour of those in power. This as has already been shown, created discontent and finally occasioned an income and property tax called the "*Catasto*." And because the payments thus exacted were permanently settled at ten in the hundred on a clear income, it was ultimately called the "*Decima*." This occurred in 1494-5 up to which period the principle of the *Catasto* was more or less adhered to as the acknowledged rule of ordinary taxation†. By the popular government of that day it was decreed that the "*Gravezze*" or ordinary taxes should be inflicted on real property alone, to the entire exemption of industry and interest of funded property: that the real property of all "*Sopportanti*" or tax-payers, should be registered as subject and tributary to the municipality of Florence for the payment of ordinary taxes, whoever might eventually become its owner: that sixteen citizens should be appointed with the authority previously held by the officers of the *Catasto*, to make a valuation of such property and the revenue it produced

* To those who are curious about such matters, we would recommend Pagnini's elaborate work on the *Decima*, in 4 vols. 4to, entitled "*Della Decima e delle altre gravzze, della Moneta, e della Mercatura de' Fio-*

rentini fino al Secolo xvi. (Lisbona e Lucca 1765), as well as Varchi, (Libro xiii., pp. 34 to 48.)

† Pagnini della *Decima*, tomo iº, cap. iiº.—Varchi, *Lib. xiii.*, p. 36.

to the owners : that these possessions should be arranged in four classes, namely ; citizens ; Contadini or country gentlemen ; ecclesiastics, and charitable institutions ; and a miscellaneous class besides of those who paid no taxes either in Florence, its county, or its district. That any fraudulent return made by the owners should subject them to a confiscation of the whole property, and one-tenth of each person's income arising from such sources was to be paid annually into the exchequer as a permanent impost ; but no movable or funded property, or income arising from daily labour or industry of any kind was thus taxed ; nor was any man personally taxed by the commissioners. Domestic habitations were also exempt from the Decima ; all necessary disbursements from which the owner received no income were deducted, and previous to levying any contributions on ecclesiastical property the leave of each "*Superior*" was to be demanded*. Notwithstanding this prohibition of any tax on industry some heavy expenses occasioned by the Pisan war led in 1508 to another burden called the "*Arbitrio*" which was imposed on all *conjectural* gains from industry, estimated annually ; this was a pure income-tax which continued until 1559 when Cosimo I. abolished it *as little profitable and extremely unjust ; because it afforded an opportunity of indulging the bad passions envy and animosity of those who had the estimation of it ; and full of errors because entirely conjectural*†.

The formation of "*Monti*" or public funds Varchi dates as early as 1222 ; 1224 ; and 1226‡, for even at those periods the government had recourse to loans, and so productive we may suppose the trade of Florence to have then been that they could effect none under twenty-five per cent. ! The book in which these loans were registered was called the "*Libro de' sette Milioni*" and its duration was forty years, at the end of which

* Pagnini della Decima, tomo iº, cap. ii., p. 39.

† Varchi, Lib. xiii., p. 37.

‡ Varchi seems to be the only author who gives these institutions so early a date.

time the public debt was liquidated. About a century after, the same operation was repeated at eighteen per cent. and a stock called "*Il Monte de' quattro Milioni*" established, which in 1336 was with other public debts, both principal and interest, formed into a consolidated fund called the "*Monte Comune*," with the same interest. This lasted until 1343 when new wars and new expenses made new debts, and to so great an amount that the whole were then gathered up into one "*Mount*" at five per cent. and lasted until 1434 when a variety of financial regulations to pay off some of this debt were promulgated. After this several stocks were formed of three, four, and seven per cent., but the average interest in 1533 was six and three-quarters. On the transfer and sale of this funded property, the Decima was apparently charged and deducted by the officers of the several "*Mounts*" previous to payment; hence there was a constant connection between the annual reformation of the Decima and public stocks, more especially as they affected the payment of young people's portions which were almost universally invested, or rather made to accumulate at a rapid rate in the funds by virtue of certain regulations for the purpose of facilitating public loans. But as it sometimes happened that the government was short of money to pay the interest on the national debt the most opulent citizens were selected as directors of the "*Mount*" in order that such deficiencies might be supplied by loans from them on the mortgage of certain branches of public revenue for their reimbursement.

The result of the Senate's deliberations was more regulated payments and a better system in the management of public finances which had been greatly shaken and disordered by the recent war; a considerable amelioration in the condition and liabilities of public defaulters from the same cause; new support and encouragement of commerce manufactures and agriculture, which had equally suffered; and a general attention to the

immediate necessities of a bleeding and exhausted people*. The currency too was somewhat altered, for about this period almost all the European mints began to relinquish the coining of golden florins and to substitute the "*crown*" of a lower carat in their place; the former being a little more than 23 $\frac{7}{8}$ carats; the latter only 22. The result was a thorough drain of the Florentine gold market; wherefore on 7th November 1533 that mint also assimilated its coinage to the rest and the market was replenished. Hence the promiscuous use of ducat, crown, and florin, by subsequent authors even when speaking of anterior events.

Clement VII. had achieved the infamy of conquering Florence, of destroying her liberty, and of reëstablishing his family as absolute princes of the fallen state; but knowing the nature of her citizens; turbulent, seditious, impatient of control; always eager for change, and not yet broke into the hand of despotism, he feared again to lose her on the first favourable occasion for revolt. He also dreaded the increasing number of Alexander's enemies both open and concealed, and feared that his own death would be the signal for a more active and dangerous outbreak than could be prudently ventured upon while he lived. The loss of wealthy England by the Reformation also preyed on his purse and spirits, for he was of a sordid mean and timid nature; and not satisfied with the exiles, incarcerations, executions and wide-spread calamity which he had so remorselessly inflicted on his unfortunate countrymen, nor with having so relentlessly disarmed and crushed the people, he sought for additional security in the fortress already mentioned, in the consummation of Alexander's marriage with Margaret of Austria, and of Catharine of Medici's alliance with Henry Duke of Orleans second son of King Francis I. Although fearful of Margaret's engagement failing if that with France were completed, yet presuming on the emperor's desire to retain him,

* *Lettere di Principi*, vol. iii., foglio 114.—Varchi, *Lib. xiii*º, pp. 34 to 48 and 61.

Clement continued his negotiations, brought them to a successful conclusion in August, and immediately sent Catharine with great pomp to Nice under charge of Filippo Strozzi and Maria Salviati mother of Cosimo de' Medici : Clement himself followed in September, carefully avoiding Florence, and early in October met the French monarch in the former city. Strozzi ostensibly to honour him was created Nuncio, but Clement's real object was his removal from Florence where his influence wealth popularity and extensive connexions caused much suspicion : the high rank and distinction of this family, Strozzi's numerous children ; the four eldest of which from the slight difference in age he used to call his brothers ; his fascinating qualities, though veiling enormous vices, and his singular talents for winning men's affections gave him exceeding influence. Yet he despised morality and mocked religion, even at the pontiff's table ; he moreover revelled in sensuality, and in commerce seems to have been rapacious and unscrupulous : but though in morals a libertine, in religion a scorner, and in politics a traitor to the liberties of his country all was so studded over with wit, grace, and personal elegance ; agreeability of manners, apparent generosity, social freedom, and public magnificence, that defects in him seemed graces, and vice itself a sort of idiocratic virtue peculiarly belonging to his station. Clement never forgave Strozzi's conduct in 1527, and the following event made him believe that Filippo desired to get rid of his favourite Alexander. Alessandra de' Mozzi wife of Lamberto Sacchetti, born of and married into a noble family, but poor and not correct in her moral conduct, entertained at various times both Filippo and his son Ruberto Strozzi as her favourites, and afterwards the duke himself. Anxious to preserve Alexander's affections she urged the palace cook to mix a love potion in his food which she foolishly believed would accomplish her wish because a similar charm, as she thought, had succeeded with a former paramour. This immediately transpired, the unfor-

fortunate lady was instantly dragged from home by Giomo da Carpi and the Unghero, carried blindfold to the ducal stables in the Piazza San Marco, and there tortured for three successive days to discover whether Filippo or his sons had persuaded her to the attempt; but nothing could be forced from her except the simple truth, a desire of securing Alexander's affections by the philter.

Through the exertions of his friend Alessandro Vitelli Filippo was saved from arrest and the affair concealed from him, so that he departed with Catharine of Medicis and proceeded to Marseilles in her uncle John Stuart Duke of Albany's squadron entirely ignorant of the transaction*.

Florence being completely governed even in the most insignificant matters by Clement, Alexander had full leisure for dissipation cruelty and debauchery: the winter A.D. 1534. was spent in banquets dances and masks where the most beautiful women were collected to allure the Duke, and at one of these an incident occurred which eventually severed every tie between the Strozzi and the Medici. As it was the beginning of serious historical and tragical events and is a striking example both of Florentine manners and the mode of administering justice, a full relation of the circumstances may be interesting. Louisa Strozzi the daughter of Filippo, and wife of Luigi Capponi in addition to all her father's fascination was beautiful and virtuous, she was therefore a constant guest at every entertainment and was especially invited to a ball and supper given at the Duke's request by Guglielmo Martelli on his marriage with Marietta Nasi. The Duke and his party appeared in masks and amongst them Giuliano Salviati his principal favourite, a man of infamous reputation whose wife almost rivalled her husband in the affections of his master. This minion choosing to persecute Louisa Strozzi during the

* Giovambatista Adriani, *Ist. di suoi Tempi*, Lib. i., p. 9.—Segni, *Lib. vi.*, pp. 23-29.

evening with the most presumptuous insolence both in acts and language, received a haughty and indignant repulse. Nothing abashed by this, when the ball had finished which lasted until broad daylight, and Louisa as was the custom had her palfrey brought to return home, he insisted on seeing her mount, took that opportunity of repeating his insulting words and actions and was again indignantly rebuffed. The affair however passed off for the moment and would have blown over altogether if Giuliano had been content with thus insulting one of the most exalted and virtuous ladies in Florence, and held his tongue. But it so happened that at a public religious spectacle he ventured to hold light discourse about Louisa in the hearing of her brother Lione Strozzi, a knight of Saint John of Jerusalem and prior of Capua.

On each Friday in March the church was accustomed to grant pardon for every sin to all who should penitentially visit the two temples situated on the heights of San Miniato, one being then held by the monks of Monte Oliveto, the other, San Salvador, by the Franciscan friars. To these two sanctuaries on such occasions crowded almost all the male and female nobility of Florence. The sharp-witted tradesfolk taking immediate advantage of this concourse always covered that beautiful hill with stalls, booths, and shops of every description and full of tempting wares and merchandise, which attracted numerous groups, especially of ladies on their return from absolution, and these in their turn drew forth more numerous assemblages of idle youth to flirt and trifle during their descent towards the town. In one of these groups stood Giuliano Salviati and Lione Strozzi, just at the moment when Louisa and a party of friends happened to be descending the hill on her return to Florence. On seeing her Giuliano began openly to brag of the liberties he had previously taken, and probably, says Varchi, of many more than he ever ventured upon; and finishing by a loud assertion in the coarsest language that he would have

her one way or the other. On hearing this insolence Lione stepped up to him and said "Giuliano, I know not whether you are aware that Louisa Strozzi is my sister"? To which Salviati replied he knew it well, and added in the same indecent strain, that women were made for men and he would have her at any rate. Lione returned no answer; but a few nights after Giuliano was found bleeding in the street from two deep wounds, one in the face and the other in the leg, which last lamed him for life. On hearing this Alexander became furious, instantly went to see him, had much discourse, left him, repeated the visit with additional discussion, and then publicly asserted that Giuliano did not know whom his assailants were, but two were tall and one a little man. A close but unsuccessful search was then made to discover the culprits; Tommaso Strozzi and Francesco Pazzi were imprisoned on suspicion because the latter was tall, the former short, and both intimate friends of Filippo's family. These two gentlemen were rigorously examined by the "Otto di Balìa" without any discovery; on the contrary Pazzi showed by the testimony of many that at the very time Salviati was hurt he was supping with Lorenzino de' Medici, and Tommaso proved that he also was following his amusements far away from the scene of action; they were nevertheless detained in prison and all believed them and Piero Strozzi to be the real culprits. Alexander, who wished to see Piero imprisoned and all three questioned by torture, got rid of the prisoners' importunity and affected to leave everything at the magistrates' disposal by at once retiring to Pisa. Strict injunctions were nevertheless given to the "Otto di Balìa" about discovering the authors of this outrage but still in vain: the cry in Florence now rose high against Piero and the two prisoners, whereupon the former, who had accompanied Alexander, told him that being so maligned he wished to return and justify himself before the "*Eight*" at Florence. The duke drily advised him to do so if he could,

because he might be assured that the offenders whomsoever they were should be most severely punished. Piero was of a bold and generous disposition and went voluntarily to prison, not so much from anxiety to clear himself, as to save his two friends from torture; for being more suspected than they and perhaps knowing more of the matter, if he were left untortured, as he expected on account of his rank and influence, they could scarcely be so dealt with. He was accordingly confined in the apartments of the captain of the guard and soon had a visit from the formidable Chancellor of the "*Eight*" Ser Maurizio of Milan. This man with an unwonted and unnatural mildness endeavoured to elicit some sort of confession from him but seeing all in vain left writing materials on the table and quitted his presence. It was the Florentine custom in those days, when any citizens of distinction were to be examined in prison for state crimes, to afford them these means of making a free confession which occasionally though not often spared the question by torture. But Piero Strozzi instead of writing the history of Giuliano Salviati's adventure wrote a sonnet in abuse of Ser Maurizio and sent it at once to the "*Otto*" the most dreaded tribunal in Florence. Such was the power of rank and wealth over law and public authorities! The magistrates indignant at this insolence were divided in opinion; one part being for the immediate application of torture according to Alexander's wishes, to which they said more respect was due than to the rank of Piero Strozzi: others considering the numerous friends and kinsmen of Piero coupled with his own great and rare personal qualities, declared that such an outrage would convulse all Florence, and more especially because they were not in possession of sufficient evidence to authorise the application of torture; neither was the cause of that importance which would justify such a course against a man like Strozzi on evidence so slight and doubtful; and after all, said they, this was nothing more than the case of a private citizen

like the rest having been wounded in a by-street, not in a church or public square, or in the Mercato Nuovo; so that it was more than sufficient to have detained a man of such quality in prison for so many days as they had done and were still doing on so trifling a matter*.

Many more days were consumed in such discussions without any result; at last it was resolved that Bartolommeo del Troscia one of the Eight but of very low family, should go and examine him: Troscia accordingly entered at once into a formal investigation of the facts and so enraged Piero that he returned haughty language in reply; this naturally brought out all the offended pride of official dignity, and assuming a much less respectful tone than at first Troscia not only failed in extracting any information but worked up Piero's temper until with a scornful tone he said, that at the termination of office he would be only Bartolommeo Troscia, but Piero would be Piero Strozzi still. Unable to manage him the magistrate returned to his colleagues and reporting what had happened threw them all into their former confusion: more time past and nothing was done; whereupon Piero overcome by pride anger and impatience wrote them another sonnet in derision, praying for dispatch, because he was neither born amongst the dregs of the populace nor yet a man to be so maltreated, for "he was no clown or clodpole." All this trifling finally terminated in an order from Clement to release every prisoner and let the affair blow over; yet a belief in their guilt generally prevailed until some time after when Pazzi was fully exonerated and the Prior of Capua, a far more likely culprit, substituted; but the truth was never known; Piero all his life denied his own participation, and strange to say, Salviati after the duke's death

* The Mercato Nuovo was the great meeting place of the merchants, the exchange in short; and the morality of the day seemed to consider crimes like assassination as we do indecent

acts; of little consequence in themselves if not done publicly and to the interruption of business. The exchange was therefore inviolable.

declared publicly that it was Alexander himself who wounded him; nay he even became so intimate with the Strozzi as often to sleep in the same bedchamber as Lione, a thing which the latter was much blamed by his friends for allowing. The anger and disdain of all the Strozzi against Alexander was now plainly shown, and when they saw Giuliano again about and carrying arms by ducal leave, both they and Pazzi became alarmed for their lives, fully believing that Alexander and Giuliano sought to despatch both Filippo and Piero, and that Alamanno Salviati, a cousin who had acquired much fame in arms, would be employed to accomplish their revenge. They managed to convince the latter of their innocence, but not feeling safe in Florence Piero demanded permission of the duke either to bear arms like Giuliano Salviati for self-defence, or quit the city. The latter was accorded on the supposition that Piero would not immediately depart and that he therefore might be despatched by Giuliano or some other person beforehand; but Piero feeling his own insecurity, immediately took post horses and without a moment's delay, accompanied by Francesco de' Pazzi, placed himself in safety with Baccio Valori in Romagna. Filippo and his remaining sons soon followed, and subsequently repaired to Rome where they remained until Pope Clement's death gave them an opportunity of joining the exiled citizens and finally breaking forth into open hostility*.

During these occurrences Clement had been busily urging on Alexander's marriage and had nearly brought everything to a conclusion when death prematurely closed the negotiation. Previous to leaving Nice he had discoursed much with Francis about the affairs of Italy, showed that monarch the errors of his system of invasion which had consequently always failed against the Spaniards in Lombardy; exposed their plan of defence and the mode of baffling them; and

* Segni varies somewhat from Varchi in his account of this transaction, but substantially agrees.—Adriani, Lib. i^o, p. 9.—Segni, Lib. vi., p. 39.—Varchi, Lib. xiv., pp. 66 to 78.

concluded by strongly urging another war against Charles, with the immediate invasion of Milan. The conquest of that duchy by France he believed would facilitate the marriage of Alexander and Margaret, and he had no objection again to deluge Italy with blood for this purpose; besides Florence would be more securely held by that duke if the two great transalpine powers were balanced, than by leaving all Italy under the imperial sceptre. The rivalry between Naples and Milan would force both to court Florence and consequently Clement himself, and thus bring about the marriage: it might besides as he thought, be advantageous for Italy which doomed by self-division to a foreign master would thrive better under two conflicting powers than one predominant tyranny*. Such was his reasoning. Yet to this tyranny Clement had mainly contributed for the purpose of reëstablishing his own more odious one; and now he coolly arranged a new war and invasion of his native country to overthrow the smallest and confirm the greatest of these evils; for the despotism of Charles at least kept Italy in peace and fell mainly on princes, while that of Alexander enslaved and demoralised a nation. Clement had never ratified the emperor's sentence of arbitration by which Reggio and Modena had recently been restored to Alphonso Duke of Ferrara: he never would acknowledge those places as belonging to any state but the Church, and hence an unceasing correspondence had been maintained under a simulated aspect of mutual benevolence when hatred rankled in the heart of both, for Alphonso was striving to mitigate Clement's feelings and induce him to give up those cities while the pope secretly watched for some unguarded moment to pounce upon them. Seeing however the eagerness of Alphonso's courtship he determined to avail himself of it in favour of Alexander and induce him to banish all the Florentine "*Fuorusciti*" or emigrants, exiles, and rebels, from his states where they had congregated in great

* Varchi, Lib. xv., pp. 55-56.

numbers especially at Ferrara and Modena. Guicciardini and Baccio Valori, two worthy instruments though the latter was now alienated from Clement, were employed to expedite this cruel business, and a reciprocal treaty was concluded which expelled the exiles of Ferrara from Florence Romagna and Bologna, and those of the latter states from Ferrara. The Florentines were thus driven forth at ten days' notice by public proclamation as "*Thieves*," "*Assassins*," and "*persons of shameful and wicked life*." This produced much misery, but after a spirited personal remonstrance to the duke they indignantly departed; yet more in pity than in anger, for Alphonso had previously protected them and now as he said acted only from necessity*. Such vindictiveness instead of securing Alexander only concentrated the scattered rays of indignation into a smaller focus and enabled his enemies to act with greater energy against him. The prolongation and local changes of exile in 1533 were productive of so much misery to the unfortunate victims that sooner than remain most of them determined to brave all the consequences of being declared rebels; but to diminish these they first endeavoured to make false sales and mortgages of their property in Florence and so prevent its confiscation. Their design was soon penetrated and on the fifteenth of May 1534 a magistracy called the "*Ufficiali de' Ribelli*" composed of four members was created to investigate with inquisitorial rigour the particulars of every sale of property by exiles and rebels, and those about to be declared rebels, and to cancel them all as invalid; and a law was also published forbidding any citizen while under a citation from the "*Otto di Balìa*" to make any transfer or contract of his property!

Public calamity had so decayed industry of every kind in Florence that the minor arts' corporations could no longer bear the expense of their establishments: the government

* Varchi, *Lib. xiv.*, pp. 78-84.

availed itself of this to reduce the whole body to a more simple and less costly form by incorporating the fourteen minor trades in four, and thus ridding the city of much expense confusion and complexity of law and punishment ; for the same crime was visited differently in the magisterial courts of different trades and by this the ends of justice were often defeated*.

Public feeling was severely tried at this time by an "*Accatto*" or forced loan, with assignments both for principal and interest on branches of revenue already mortgaged, and though made on other pretences its real object was to meet the expenses of that citadel destined to lie so heavy on the Florentine neck in confirmation of existing slavery. The first stone of this fortress was laid on the fifteenth of July, according to the directions of Friar Giuliano Bonamici of Prato the most famous astrologer of his day, and the new taxation followed on the twenty-ninth ; but Clement lived not to see it completed, for in the midst of his cruel and culpable designs he was seized with one of those slow fevers so common at Rome which lasted with slight intermissions from June to September ; on the twenty-fifth of which month in the fifty-sixth year of his age and the eleventh of his reign he was summoned before that tribunal where God's mercy alone could have given him any hopes of escaping condemnation. Pope Clement VII. died unregretted even by those nearest to his person ; deceitful, avaricious, cruel, and heartless, he had all the bad without any of the redeeming qualities of his race : he was able, acute, and clear-sighted as a statesman, but weak and unsteady in his resolutions, and never by any chance sincere. He was detested by the Romans as the author of all their calamities, and by everybody else as one of the basest men and worst pontiffs that ever wore the sacred seal of the fisherman †.

* Leggi e Bandi di Toscana, Provisione 17th Luglio, 1534.

† Ammirato, Lib. xxxi., p. 429.—Nerli, Lib. xi., p. 273.—Adriani, Lib. i., p. 8.—Cambi, pp. 137-142.—

Nardi, Lib. ix.—Guicciardini, Lib. xx., cap. xxxviii.—Varchi, Lib. xiv., pp. 85-88.—Segni, Lib. vi., pp. 41-42.—We here take leave of Guicciardini and Cambi, but are supplied by Adriani,

After Clement's obsequies the cardinals assembled in conclave on the fourteenth of October and immediately elected Alessandro da Farnese Cardinal of Ostia who assumed the name of Paul III. Clement had strenuously recommended this choice which coupled with his great age and cunningly assumed infirmity the election was quickly accomplished. His known hatred to the Medici attracted all the scattered exiles to Rome when with Cardinal Ippolito as a centre they discussed the affairs of Florence. Ippolito detested his cousin, and it was said once endeavoured to blow him up with gunpowder in the Casa Pazzi where he was a frequent visitor to the Marchioness of Massa sister-in-law to Giovambatista Cibo Archbishop of Marseilles, whom he was by some believed to have engaged in the conspiracy*. The fact seems true, but Ippolito's participation very doubtful, and Varchi who is both blunt and scandalous makes no such accusation†. Angry at losing Florence he at once assumed a patriotic tone in favour of liberty, but the exiles knew him, and made use of his anger against Alessandro as a means of destroying both; nor were they without other supporters: Filippo Strozzi together with the Cardinals Gaddi, Ridolfi, and Salviati, each from private pique or injury now openly joined them. Giuliano Soderini who had been invited to Rome by the pope from his French bishopric of Saintes also united heart and hand against the tyrant; and as he was one of Paul's bosom friends a powerful array of ecclesiastical princes gave more spirit to the cause without blinding the exiles about the real views of their allies, especially as they one and all agreed to the destruction of Alexander; except perhaps Antonfrancesco degli Albizzi who having become intimate with

while Segni and Varchi flow on in full stream, and Ammirato, though drawing to a conclusion, yet taken in conjunction with the elder Ammirato becomes almost a cotemporary author.

* Varchi, Lib. xiv., p. 137.—Platina,

Vita di Paulo III., p. 528.—Ammirato, Lib. xxxi., p. 430.

† It would seem more likely an act of jealousy than anything else; besides the dates differ, and Varchi places it in August; Segni some months before.

many of the imperial court and sought its protection, was wary in his personal opposition to that prince : nor was he less decided against a coalition with those churchmen or any others who had supported Clement in his evil deeds, and was moreover inclined to act alone in favour of the commonwealth by means of his personal influence*.

Baccio Valori lost his place at the accession of Paul III. and returned to Florence but afterwards attached himself secretly to the exiles, as well from mortification at Alexander's neglect and a consequent failure of supplies for his own extravagance, as from a proposed marriage between his son Paulantonio and Madalena Strozzi, Filippo's daughter†. Paul III. being bent on nepotism warmly encouraged every effort against the Medici, whose grandeur interfered with his views; he even scared Ippolito from Rome for a season by his menaces and insults although that cardinal had been one of his warmest and most effectual supporters. Complaining that Clement had cheated him out of ten years' pontificate he notwithstanding his great age and affected debility enjoyed fifteen years of that sacred dignity though expressly chosen to make a speedy vacancy! Such a character did not fail to seize on so generous a pretext as the restoration of Florentine liberty to promote its objects for vice is ever prompt to steal the cloak of virtue: thus he fanned the flame against Alexander who returned it by preventing him from filling up a single vacant benefice in the Florentine territory‡. This was the state of faction outside of Florence; within, some additional amelioration was silently proceeding amidst the tumult of those princely pleasures which leaving Alexander no time for business threw everything on graver statesmen. Reforms favourable to the poor were effected; abuses were rectified in civil law-courts; a better choice of magistrates was secured, the tenure of office by deputy pro-

* Varchi, Lib. xiv, pp. 100 and 130.

† Ibid., p. 92.—Nardi, Lib. x., p. 244.

‡ Varchi, Lib. xiv., p. 98.

hibited, a board created to stop if possible the rapid decay of trade and manufactures in Florence; and another to ameliorate the still miserable condition of all the rural districts*.

While Alexander was sharply watching the exiles they repaired to Rome in considerable numbers supported by friends and relatives throughout Europe, especially France, for they were generally poor and destitute†. As a preliminary step Galiotto Giugni, Salvstro Aldobrandini, Jacopo Nardi, Paulantonio Soderini, Lorenzo Carnesecchi and Luigi Alamanni (who being in France was replaced by Dante da Castiglione‡) were elected as the "*Procuratori*" or managing committee of the defunct republic, and formally confirmed in this office by all the fugitives in France, Venice, Rome, and every other country where Florentine exiles were to be found§. By these it was settled in conjunction with the cardinals that a deputation should wait on the emperor at Barcelona but in separate bodies, because the cardinals who remained with Clement during the Florentine war, or those who were closely related to the Medici; Ippolito himself; and above all Filippo Strozzi the great counsellor of Alexander's establishment as Duke of Florence; could scarcely now join in the complaints and remonstrances of those very exiles whose misfortunes they had mainly caused. Two sets of deputies were therefore despatched which uniting in three general points left all details to the instructions of their several constituents.

Giugni, Soderini, and Antonio Berardi for the exiles; and Lorenzo Ridolfi, Piero Strozzi, Giovanmaria Stratigopolo and Bernardo Salviati for the cardinals, were instructed to demand the restitution of Florentine liberty, the deposition of Alexander

* *Lettere di Principi*, vol. iii., folio 114.—Varchi, *Lib. xiv.*, pp. 101-4.

† Nardi, *Lib. x°*, p. 251.

‡ There is a discrepancy between Varchi and Nardi, the latter making

Antonfrancesco and Jacopo degli Albizzi, father and son, members instead of Castiglione and Soderini.

§ Nardi, *Lib. x°*, pp. 242-243.

and substitution of Ippolito, and finally the establishment of a popular council of one or two hundred citizens, so as to replace Florence in the same state as it was in the beginning of 1530. Ippolito's agent at the imperial court had orders to join in these demands; and the other deputies were generally instructed to implore the protection of Cæsar against a man whose tyranny exceeded the bounds of everything but his cruelty and licentiousness. A recent event added force to their supplications; but whether really implicating Alexander as Segni positively asserts, it is now more easy to believe than authenticate.

Louisa Strozzi as already remarked was noted for her excellent qualities; her beauty had inflamed the passions of Alexander who made such proposals as aroused a proud indignant spirit and he was answered as he deserved. A few nights after, she supped with her sister Maria the wife of Lorenzo Ridolfi and was almost immediately convulsed with spasmodic pains in the stomach which carried her off in two hours. Varchi says that it was the act of her own relations who sacrificed her as Virginius of old did his daughter, lest their family honour should be tarnished by royal villany! These suspicions brought more infamy on the already odious reputation of Alexander yet, according to the above author, it by no means followed that he meditated this violence. Segni on the contrary asserts that the instrument of Alexander's revenge was Vincenzo Ridolfi; but this man's brother Giorgio had only a short time before been stabbed by the hands of Alexander himself through jealousy in a love intrigue, and both of them had been his companions from childhood. Such was the state of feeling and moral sentiment in the court of Alessandro de' Medici*!

These two cases were cited amongst many others, by Piero Strozzi and Lorenzo Ridolfi, to the emperor at Barcelona, who was implored to withdraw his countenance from a monster that

* Segni, Lib. vii, pp. 65-66.—Varchi, Lib. xiv., pp. 104-106.

exceeded Phalarus of Agrigentum in cruelty, and out-did all the abominations of every other tyrant*. Charles V. was always much influenced by Andrea Doria and the latter begged hard for Florentine liberty, offering to make a league between Genoa, Florence, Lucca and Siena which would secure Milan without any expense to the emperor who should be its chief. The latter was slow in resolve, but once having made up his mind he rarely altered, and being on the point of embarkation for Tunis coolly promised, amidst some general and equivocal expressions of love, peace, justice, and good government, to consider the question on his arrival at Naples which took place full six months later, in November 1535†.

The general and unsatisfactory character of this reply‡ while it cast a gloom over the others, particularly irritated the impatient temper of Ippolito who determined to pass over to Africa himself and plead his own cause before Cæsar as a confederate, but failing to ruin the more fortunate Alexander, it was said that he meant to reconcile himself with him by means of the emperor§. Whatever might have been his real motive for a visit to Tunis both he and the exiles thought that they could make use of each other for their own purposes and he was elected their chief with a council of six citizens to attend his commands, the latter bearing secret orders to obey him only as long as he was true to the cause||.

The Cardinal Ippolito arrived at Itri in the kingdom of Naples towards the end of July where he was joined by Francesco Corsini, Niccolo Macchiavelli, Antonio Berardi, Dante da

* Segni, Lib. vii., p. 62.

† Muratori, Annali.

‡ The reply of Charles in the original Spanish is given in the hitherto unedited tenth Book of Nardi's History, which has been compiled from various insulated MSS. (of which the author of this work has one) by the praiseworthy labours of Lelio Arbib, and added to the recent and handsome

edition of that history, printed at Florence in 1838-1841, in 2 vols. Nardi, as a prominent actor in this scene, as a friend of rational liberty, and as an old experienced man, deserves great attention about all these transactions.

§ Nardi, Lib. x., p. 257.

|| Ibid., pp. 257-262.—Varchi, Lib. xiv., pp. 123-128.

Castiglione, Bartolommeo Nasi, Bartolommeo Popoleschi, and Giovacchino Guasconi on the part of the exiles, by whose rank and numbers (for many others accompanied them) he expected to make a more magnificent and imposing appearance before the emperor*. While at Itri making preparations for his voyage he was a frequent visitor to the beautiful Julia Gonzaga wife of Vespasiano Colonna Count of Fondi to whom he was attached †: after one of these visits he was suddenly taken ill on the second of August 1535 and in a few days after died believing himself poisoned notwithstanding a declaration of the physicians that his death was caused by one of the common intermittent marsh fevers of the country, unattended by poisonous symptoms. It is said that the exiles were much pleased at his decease which lessened the detested family by one, and therefore rendered it less difficult to rid themselves of the other, little knowing what a substitute was preparing for them in the youthful person of Cosimo, then scarcely seventeen years of age! Dante da Castiglione and Berlinghere Berlingheri died with like symptoms the next day and most of the Florentine escort not long after: Ippolito suspected his butler Giovan Andrea da Città di Castello but ordered that no inquiries should be made: Alexander's friends accused the Pope of doing this deed for the purpose of enriching Cardinal Farnese with Ippolito's spoils; some attributed it to the bad air in that unhealthy place and season; yet the manifest signs of poison destroyed this opinion in the mind of others and strengthened that of Duke Alexander's criminality which was equally entertained; but there is

* Varchi, Lib. xiv. pp. 127-8.

† The fame of this celebrated beauty who was also Duchess of Trajetto, was so great as to tempt the famous corsair Barbarossa to land two thousand men, scale the walls of Fondi, and attempt to take her off as an offering to the sultan. She escaped almost naked and barefoot; but the miserable

inhabitants suffered. (Vide *Muratori, Annali, Anno 1534.*)

‡ Segni, Lib. vii., p. 84.—Ammirato, Lib. i., p. 430.—Paulo Giovio, Lib. xxxiv., p. 388.—Adriani, Lib. i., p. 10.—Muratori, Anno 1535.—Platina, p. 528.—Nerli, Lib. xii., p. 278.—Varchi, Lib. xiv., p. 130.

no certainty. Alexander was capable of anything and had more reasons than Paul for wishing his cousin in heaven, yet Giovan Andrea was liberated from the Castle of Saint Angelo without any public examination and went immediately to Florence where he was received at the ducal court according to his station; after some days he retired to Borgo San Sepolcro and was there murdered by the people. The strongest evidence against Paul III. and that most in favour of Alexander is the liberation of this man, who at first owned himself culpable; for had it been by Alexander's command, so bitter an enmity as Paul would have pursued the investigation and published the duke's guilt while he himself enjoyed its fruits in the distribution of Ippolito's rich benefices*.

Ippolito's death did not affect the movements of Alexander's enemies but increased his own precautions: on the emperor's arrival at Naples Salvestro Aldobrandini was despatched by the former to ascertain how he was disposed, and after some unpromising interviews a more favourable report determined them to send Filippo Strozzi, the three cardinals, and a large body of the most distinguished exiles to court, where Charles had already summoned Alexander on a promise of replacing him safely in Florence.† They formed a cavalcade of about thirteen hundred horse, and rode from Rome under every precaution against the wiles of Alexander who it was believed would leave no means unattempted to destroy them, more especially the Strozzi. He on the other hand although sensible to the danger of quitting Florence at such a moment determined to obey; wherefore mounting three hundred lances of his body guard well armed with corselets and arquebuses, and accompanied by young Cosimo de' Medici with a numerous and brilliant suite of Florentine gentlemen, amongst whom were Francis Guicciardini, Robert Acciaiuoli, Matteo Strozzi, and Bartolommeo Valori, the most able men of his party, Alexander left Florence on the twenty-first of

* Varchi, Lib. xiv., pp. 132-136.

† Ibid., p. 138.

December and suddenly appearing in Rome rode straight to the pontifical palace where having occupied the stairs and entrance to the pope's apartments he appeared in the presence chamber, reverently kissed Paul's foot, and then retired to the Villa Medici without the town whence he departed next morning for Naples*. There he was received well, but neither were the exiles without friends; both Granville and Francisco Coves the emperor's principal ministers besides many others, almost all purchased, were in their favour, and the reception given them by Charles himself, whether feigned or otherwise, raised their hopes of ultimate success especially as Margaret's marriage was now no longer a pledge of his friendship with Clement; above all they relied on the improbability of that princess being given to a man so infamous. But Charles's guides were ambition and self-interest not honour and morality: these and religion were with him as other monarchs of the age; names, not substance: he detested the very shadow of popular government, and that of Florence more deeply than all because it had uniformly adhered to France and attacked the very kingdom, nay the very city where he now sat in judgment upon its scattered remnants. Besides he was already on the point of war with that crown and therefore more likely to be swayed by the interested devotion of one whose welfare must necessarily depend on him alone, than on those many and discordant minds whom he still believed to be devoted to his rival. Antonfrancesco degli Albizzi was named as orator, but he was wary, did not like openly inveighing against Alexander by whom he with Doria's aid soon after had his rents restored: he feigned illness, and ultimately declined the honour of being his country's advocate. This task consequently fell on old Jacopo Nardi the historian, who after many mortifying excuses and delays on the emperor's part, suddenly met him in the antechamber while going to mass; all the exiles then fell on their knees before him and actually barring his pas-

* Segni, Lib. vii., pp. 86-87.

sage addressed him with much energy and pathos before the whole court, beginning with the broken capitulation of Florence and ending with the cruelty, depravity, and tyranny of Alexander.

A deep feeling of commiseration and general sympathy affected the audience ; even Charles himself let some warmer expressions escape amidst the judicial coldness of his answer, the result of which was that judges would be named to hear their cause when formally reduced to writing. This was instantly done, and answered article by article in the space of eight days by Guicciardini who fairly objected to Filippo Strozzi, Ridolfi, and Salviati, Clement's ablest abettors in establishing the existing Florentine constitution, now bristling up against it and pretending to be patriots : all three prelates had remained and acted with that pontiff during the siege and therefore could not now honestly blame its consequences : he moreover argued that there was a large body amongst the exiles who were not state criminals but felons condemned by the laws of their country ; outlaws, and others who had fled from legal punishment ; none of whom could justly demand that notice which was due to the political exiles in this appeal. He then artfully proceeded to prove that the capitulation was never signed by either Charles or Clement ; that it was nevertheless unbroken ; that the beheaded citizens were punished for crimes unconnected with it, and that the Florentines were still free ! Some charges against Alexander were superficially excused as youthful sallies ; others denied, and his irregularities thrown back on the Strozzi as chief promoters of whatever might be reprehensible in that prince's conduct. To the particular though numerous personal accusations of extreme licentiousness "no especial answer could be given ; but "the virtue of his excellency ; the fame, the opinion which is "spread through the city of his prudence and moral conduct, are "a sufficient reply ; his proceedings being all so praiseworthy that "the calumnies of the malignant are unable to obscure them." For his activity in upholding the tyrant, Guicciardini received

the name of "*Messer Cerrettieri*" (the infamous minion of the Duke of Athens) but the paragraph just cited could scarcely have been written except in covert scorn of the duke himself or in ridicule of the charges against him *.

There is no knowing what the ducats of Filippo Strozzi and his companions might have accomplished amongst the imperial ministers if some extraneous events had not at once determined Charles to bring matters to a conclusion. The exiles made liberal offers to him for the freedom of their country, and he listened; but while doubting, Francesco Sforza Duke of Milan died and his illegitimate brother Giovanni Paulo Marquis of Caravaggio instantly set out to demand the investiture of that duchy from the emperor while Don Antonio de Leyva advanced from Pavia and endeavoured to gain possession of the citadel. On arriving at Florence Sforza retired to bed in good health at an inn; next morning he was brought forth a corpse and no questions asked: this deed was laid to the charge of Don Antonio in order to rid his master of importunity and himself of a competitor in the emperor's favour. Thus Milan fell to the empire; and Francis I. who had been long bargaining to recover Nice which had been pledged to the dukes of Savoy, on hearing of Sforza's death redoubled his exertions, but in consequence of imperial influence, unsuccessfully; for negotiations having been suddenly abandoned by the duke, Francis overran all Savoy and most of Piedmont with a large army commanded by Philip de Chabot High Admiral of France; nor would conquest have stopped there had this general not received instructions to remain behind the Dora while the Cardinal of Lorraine proceeded to Naples on an amicable mission to Charles. These events probably fixed the emperor's mind in favour of Alexander and a despotic government devoted to him, instead of a more free and less

* Nardi, Lib. x., pp. 251-299. — Varchi, Lib. xiv., pp. 138-219. — Segni, Lib. vii., pp. 89-90.

concentrated administration habitually inclined to his rival*.

A rejoinder to Alexander's reply was made according
A.D. 1535.

to Charles's desire by the exiles on the sixteenth of January 1536; a rebutter soon followed from Guicciardini; and in February imperial judgment was given entirely in favour of Alexander's absolute sovereignty, therefore against the exiles as regarded a change of government, but favourable to them as private citizens, inasmuch as they were all to be restored to their country their rights and their property, with the present and future safety of their persons guaranteed. The exiles although most of them were in extreme poverty and numbers actually living on charity, at once rejected an offer which saved themselves by sacrificing Florence: their reply was worthy of free men and patriots, and exhibits the noble spirit that generally prevailed in this assembly, which was probably of a higher tone and purer motives than some of its leaders could boast of.

"We come not here," said they; "we come not here
"to ask the emperor under what conditions we should serve
"Duke Alexander, nor to obtain by his means our pardon,
"after having voluntarily, justly, and as was our duty, striven
"to maintain the liberties of Florence; nor to recover our
"possessions, nor to return as slaves into a city whence but
"yesterday we issued freemen: but we have appealed to Cæsar,
"confiding in his goodness and justice, to give us that entire
"and real liberty which his agents and ministers promised in
"his name to preserve for us, and with it the restoration to
"their country and possessions of those worthy citizens who
"contrary to the same good faith have been despoiled of them;
"offering his majesty all those securities and acknowledg-
"ments that he himself may judge to be fair and possible.
"But now seeing by the memorial just presented to us that
"more respect is paid to the desires of Alexander than to the

* Muratori.—Segni, Lib. vii., pp. 92-94.

“ merits and justice of our cause, that the name of liberty
“ is not even mentioned, and but little said of the public
“ interests; and that the restoration of banished citizens is
“ not free, as by justice and obligation it should be made, but
“ limited and conditioned as if it had been sought as a favour;
“ we have therefore nothing else to reply except that we are
“ resolved to live and die as free as we were born, but again
“ supplicating his majesty to deliver our unfortunate city from the
“ yoke of so bitter a servitude; and this we firmly hope he will
“ deign to order in conformity to his own good faith and justice.
“ But should his will and judgment be otherwise let him be
“ content that with his good grace we may be enabled to wait
“ until God (and his majesty when better informed) provide
“ for our just desires, assuring him that we are all most
“ resolute never to stain from private convenience the purity
“ and sincerity of our minds, by failing in those duties which
“ every good citizen owes to his country” *.

This firm and dignified answer was admired by all Italy except the courts of Charles and Alexander: the sentiments were probably common to a great body of exiles but were scarcely those of the cardinals: the emperor took advantage of everything to play off the former against Alexander whom he not only intended to defraud of Margaret's stipulated marriage portion, amounting to 200,000 ducats, but also to extract half that amount from him for the present emergency. He therefore promptly disowned the decree, declaring that it was not his judgment but a proposal made by Alexander; yet it was written in the Castilian tongue and accompanied by other circumstances proving its authenticity! The exiles were therefore entreated to remain and reconcile themselves with the duke, the emperor offering himself as a mediator with all the weight of his authority. A second notice was in consequence transmitted to him through Don Pedro Zappata confirming their former resolution not

* Nardi, Lib. x., pp. 299-303.—Varchi, Lib. xiv., pp. 219 to 231.

to return to Florence except with complete restitution of their country's freedom; and this without a dissenting voice from a large body of men most of whom were suffering by the pressure of extreme want*.

Pedro Zappata, slighted in Florence by Alexander and now bribed by Strozzi, worked zealously for the exiles, who through him proposed that within three months a free government should be established, that Vitelli should hold both city and fortress in the emperor's name, and that by consent of his deputy alone all causes beyond a certain amount of fine or punishment were to be decided. At the end of that period Charles was not only to resolve but act; state prisoners were to be liberated; confiscated property restored; all banished men recalled, and the Republic settled under the conditions of 1530. Then after leaving a last fervent declaration and remonstrance with the Count of Sifonte, the exiles departed under a profound impression of the emperor's turpitude. Alexander at one moment despaired so much as by Baccio Valori's deceitful counsel to think of quitting Naples unlicensed, but was prevented by Guicciardini, and the former now remained at Rome as his declared enemy.

The duke returned in triumph to Florence though little satisfied with Charles, who had not only made him pay sharply for his favour but exacted a promise that if Alexander died childless the citadel should be consigned to him; and for this purpose Paulo Antonio da Parma after a secret engagement with the emperor to perform this promise was placed in command there†.

Charles V. soon repaired to Rome and was afterwards magnificently received at Florence; the silver keys of the city were presented to him in a golden salver, and the gate at which he entered was knocked away as a needless protection while

* Nerli, *Lib.* xii., p. 282.—Nardi, *Lib.* x., p. 305.

† Varchi, *Lib.* xiv., pp. 231-40.—

Nardi, *Lib.* x., pp. 305-316.—Nerli, *Lib.* xii., p. 282.

Cæsar remained within ! On the fourth of May he proceeded by Pisa and Lucca into Lombardy without conferring a single honour on Florence, but on the contrary left his poisonous sting more deeply fixed in her entrails *.

Soon after Charles's departure the young bride of thirteen made her entry under charge of Don Pedro de Toledo Viceroy of Naples, his wife, and a numerous suite of nobility. After a second marriage ceremony in June, which from the duke's contempt for astrology took place during an eclipse of the sun, she was established in the Medician palace opposite to Saint Mark's convent of her husband's residence. At these nuptials were annulled all the sentences of exile passed in 1530 on those who had not broken their confines, many of whom returned but numbers would not accept this boon at the tyrant's hands : Baccio Valori was outlawed, Piero Strozzi entered the French service, and all his family became rebels to the Florentine state †.

The war which Clement VII. almost with his dying breath had excited Francis I. to declare against Charles, and in which he also engaged the Turks, had now commenced and an injudicious invasion of Provence terminating by an attack on Marseilles with one of the finest imperial armies ever brought into the field, only ended in misfortune. Anne de Montmorenci had laid waste the country ; provisions failed ; the troops were obliged to live on grass and fruits ; sickness supervened, and the army was nearly annihilated ; it broke up and dispersed ; Charles V. retired in extreme mortification to Genoa universally blamed for thus acting against the advice of his ablest generals. Had the enterprise succeeded he would have been a hero, and yet equally blameworthy ! Alexander for a while was occupied with his young wife without any relaxation of his illicit pleasures ; by turns a tyrant and a boon companion, a violator of

* Varchi, *Lib. xiv.*, pp. 248-250.

† Segni, *Lib. vii.*, p. 109.—Nerli, *Lib. xii.*, p. 284.

women and a torturer of men, he passed a few brief days ! One evening about sunset he was seen crossing the Ponte-all-Trinità with Lorenzo de' Medici behind him on the same horse, accompanied only by two grooms. Several citizens who were sitting in the open air said to Francesco Vettori, "*Francesco there 's the duke.*" At seeing this Vettori became vexed, and next morning demanded an audience when he bluntly exclaimed, "Sir I am sorry to be one of your friends, for your conduct is "such as to lose both yourself and them at the same moment!" The duke looking surprised, he continued. "Why what follies "are these? That a prince who has conquered Florence by "his arms and is the first that ever had such power, should "ride out almost unattended, another man sitting on the same "horse, at night too, and with only two or three followers ! "And what is still more dangerous, he trusts one person alone "to hold his silken ladder when he scales a convent wall!" The duke answered laughing, "Fear not Francesco, we can- "not avoid our destiny; but now that I see how much thou "art attached to me I will be more careful."

Thus passed the winter of 1536 : but his fate was drawing
 A.D. 1537. nigh. On the sixth of January 1537 the festival of the "*Befania*" or Epiphany *, not having yet finished the twenty-sixth year of his life, this licentious youth was suddenly despatched to render an account of his evil deeds at that tribunal where all his passions and temptations would be fairly weighed against the moral powers with which the Almighty had armed him on purpose to overcome them.

There are many and variously narrated stories of this deep

* It was on Saturday, 5th January, the eve of the Epiphany; but counting in the Florentine manner which terminates the day at sunset, this event is placed by all the historians except Nardi on the 6th. Superstition observed that Alexander died in the year 1536 (*Florentine style*), on the sixth

of the month, at the sixth hour of the night, of six wounds, at twenty-six years of age, the sixth year of his reign, and therefore six sixes were combined in his death, making up the age of the current century. (Vide *Nardi*, Lib. x., p. 322, *note*, and *Varchi*, Lib. xv., p. 278.)

and disgusting tragedy, in which the hero and the catastrophe awaken adverse feelings and excite reflections on good and evil more interesting to the imagination than satisfactory to the judgment; nevertheless as Varchi's account was taken down from the mouths of the two great actors Lorenzino and Scoronconcolo, in a personal conversation with himself, if it be not quite correct there can at least be no better authority; but it is probably true, because there was then little blame and much glory attached to the deed, wherefore we exclusively follow that historian's narrative. This interview with Lorenzo took place in the Villa Paluello eight miles from Padua, that with Scoronconcolo in the residence of Filippo Strozzi at Venice, and Varchi himself a man not lightly credulous, professes an implicit belief in the veracity of their statements*.

But before entering on this transaction some account of the person habits and character of the "Florentine Brutus" will be expedient: Lorenzo, from his slight and diminutive figure called Lorenzino de' Medici, was born in 1514 of Maria Soderini and Pierfrancesco di Lorenzo de' Medici great grandson of old Cosimo's brother Lorenzo: his mother who was the daughter of Tommaso di Paulantonio Soderini bore a character for extreme prudence and virtue; after losing her husband she devoted all her faculties to the care of his children, and Lorenzino displayed early and uncommon ability. No sooner had he been released from maternal authority than his unquiet dissatisfied and sceptical mind was displayed, and under the tuition and example of Filippo Strozzi he very soon learned to ridicule every moral and religious sentiment, became addicted to low company and guilty pleasures, especially lasciviousness, in the pursuit of which neither age, sex, nor condition formed any obstacle to his cupidity. He was sociable with, and even caressed all his companions indiscriminately, but deceitful, and esteemed none: eager for glory and celebrity, he missed no

* Varchi, Lib. xv., p. 264.

opportunity of word or action to acquire the reputation of wit and accomplishments: he never laughed, only smiled or simpered, was rather graceful than handsome, extravagantly beloved by Pope Clement, and yet, as he owned himself after Alexander's death, was ready at any time to murder him! One night at Rome he secretly broke the heads off all the sculptured images on the arch of Constantine and other antiquities: the culprit being unknown Clement in a burst of anger ordered that whoever had committed this barbarous act, with the sole exception of Cardinal Ippolito, should without trial be instantly gibbeted. The latter begged his cousin's life, excusing the act as partly puerile and partly proceeding from the family passion for antiquities: Clement was not easily pacified; called him the disgrace and infamy of the Medician race, banished him from Rome, and allowed two public proclamations to go forth against him; one from the "*Caporioni*," or chiefs of the city districts, which forbid his ever again entering within the gates; another by the senator offering a premium for his head if killed within the city walls. So great and so general was this indignation (a curious mixture of taste, civilization, and barbarity) that Francesco Maria Molza, then noted for his great eloquence and learning, made a bitter oration in the Roman academy against the young iconoclast the stinging severity of which met with universal approbation*.

On his return to Florence he assiduously courted the duke, feigned well, and became one of his most favoured associates and even advisers in affairs of state and pleasure. It is probable that some communication occurred at Naples between Lorenzino and Filippo Strozzi, for on Alexander's return his cousin became more watchful, assiduous, and indefatigable in proposing new pleasures, in seeking out fresh amours, fresh tastes, fresh luxuries; no incitement was neglected, no means untried to confirm the attachment and confidence of his victim. They

* Varchi, Lib. x., pp. 264-6.

were kinsmen, nearly of equal age, and had become so intimate that each had a key to one secret door for the purpose of concealed intercourse : Lorenzo submitted himself to Alexander's whims in everything and in every way ; persuaded him that he was a spy on the exiles, with whom he either did or affected to correspond, and frequently exhibited their letters to the duke : he also simulated the coward, affected timidity, and would neither practise nor carry arms, nor even hear them named without apparent reluctance. His timidity amused Alexander, who from Lorenzo's being fond of solitary rambles and seeming to care little for office, property, or honours, renamed him the "*Philosopher*" but by those who knew him better he was emphatically called "*Lorenzaccio*." He was favoured by the duke in everything, especially in a certain lawsuit with Cosimo about some disputed property ; and so unbounded was Alexander's confidence that not content with using him as his general pander, he insisted on Lorenzo's bringing him in contact with Caterina, the beautiful and virtuous wife of Lionardo Ginori whose residence was close by the Medici palace and the adjacent house of her nephew Lorenzino*.

The latter fed him with hopes but continued watching, and still affecting an abhorrence and terror of blood pursued his solitary walks with pallid countenance and grave and downcast air ; he spoke with few, frequented the most lonely recesses of Florence, and melancholy seemed stamped upon his brow ; yet while some believed him crazy the more observant suspected a far deeper game than he was willing should be seen by the world. Besides an acute ingenious mind, he is described as possessing exceeding fluency of speech, but was naturally of so grave a disposition that in childhood all his pursuits and amusements were of a serious character and even thus early he had acquired the name of "*Philosopher*" †.

* Varchi, Lib. xv., p. 267.

† Segni, Lib. vii., p. 120.—Ammirato, Lib. xxxi., p. 435.—Fil. Nerli,

Lib. xii., p. 286.—Paulo Giovio, Lib. xxxviii., p. 497.

By his apparent devotion or rather prostitution of himself to Alexander, Lorenzo became generally hated especially by the great, against whom he kept continually warning him; while amongst *them* he appeared in his true but uncredited character of the duke's most determined foe. "How can I," said he one day when the latter charged him with slanders, "how can I prove myself a real friend without feigning to be your deadly enemy? This is my only way of watching over your life and government, and for your honour and security I am willing to sacrifice my own reputation"*. Such bold conduct produced unbounded confidence, and so far was this carried that spies, whether true or false, were introduced to the duke, amongst them Piero Ambrogi an exile and confidant of Strozzi and the cardinals, who informed Lorenzo and Alexander, or professed to do so, of all the enemy's movements†.

Amongst those most indignant with Lorenzo was Piero Strozzi whose confidential and continual abuse of the duke had been all faithfully reported: during the appeal at Naples Piero happening to meet his friend Pandolfo Pucci, a favourite of Alexander's, with other company, called aloud to him saying, "Pandolfo, tell Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco de' Medici from me "that I once believed him to be a man of character but that I "no longer believe it." To this Lorenzo replied through the same channel, "that he hoped one day, and very quickly, "to show Piero Strozzi that he was a man of character." This Pucci thought necessary to relate to the duke but Lorenzo had already forestalled him and strengthened his master's confidence‡.

Caterina Ginori had resisted every attempt of Alexander to

* Segni, Lib. viii., p. 130.—Varchi, Lib. xiv., p. 158.—Ammirato, Lib. xxxi., p. 435.—Paulo Giovio, Stor., Lib. xxxviii., p. 498.

† Segni, Lib. vii., p. 110.

‡ Nardi, Lib. x., p. 295.—Varchi, Lib. xiv., p. 159.—Nardi, Varchi, and

Giovio relate this anecdote differently, though substantially agreeing: I have principally followed Nardi who was on the spot; besides there are some particulars related by Varchi that can scarcely be credited.

corrupt her, and his passion increased with the obstacles ; this was such an occasion as Lorenzo sought ; but when urged he represented all the difficulties, yet finished by exclaiming that women were always women ; her husband was at Naples, his affairs in great disorder, and no better time could be taken to seduce her ! This he promised to accomplish. Meanwhile he never ceased entertaining a ruffian follower called Michele del Tovalaccino, or Scoronconcolo* (a man whom he had saved from the gallows) with repeated complaints of a certain insolent courtier who he declared was continually turning him into ridicule. " But," added he, " in the name of Heaven."—At which Scoronconcolo flared up and exclaimed, "*Only say whom he is, and leave the rest to me ; he shall give you no more trouble.*" As Lorenzo was continually petting this man like a bloodhound, he became eager for the chase and constantly demanded the name of his enemy. "*Oh no,*" was commonly Lorenzino's answer ; "*he is a favourite of the Duke's.*" " Be he whom he may," quickly replied the bravo, "*I will kill him ; were he Christ himself !*" Lorenzo seeing how well the spirit was working addressed him one day at dinner ; saying, "*Come now, as thou hast so often and so resolutely promised ; I am certain that thou wilt not fail me, as I never will fail thee in anything I have power over ; I must tell thee that the time of action is arrived !*" "*I am ready,*" growled forth Scoronconcolo. " But," replied Lorenzo, "*I myself must also assist ; and in order to do our work securely I will take care that he shall be brought to a place where there can be no danger, and no doubt of my success*" †. That very night was the time agreed upon ; the Duke had been amusing himself all the day ; masking on a fine spirited horse and in company with L'Unghero he remained long exhibiting certain feats of horsemanship before the windows of some mistress of

* Segni calls him "*Baccio.*" By others "*Piero di Gioanabate ;*" but

all agree in the common appellation of † Varchi, Lib. xv., p. 268.

the hour. In the evening he returned fatigued to the palace and having thrown off his coat of mail and supped, was about to retire when Lorenzino appeared with his usual melancholy aspect saying "*Seignior what shall we do this evening ?*" "*I will to bed,*" replied Alexander, "*for I am weary.*" Lorenzo then stooped and whispered in his ear that he had with the promise of money finally prevailed on Caterina Ginori to consent to a secret interview in his, Lorenzo's, chambers but with a strict promise for her honour's sake that no person should see her ingress or regress *. The Duke elated with this news put on a robe of green satin lined with sable in the Neapolitan fashion and then proceeded to take his gloves ; there were two pair before him, one of mail, the other of perfumed leather for society : after a moment's pause he said, "*Which shall I take ? Those for war, or those for love ?*" And immediately fixing on the latter issued forth accompanied by his two minions Giomo and L'Unghero besides two other attendants. To avoid being watched he went straight to the Place of Saint Mark where he dismissed all except L'Unghero who posted himself under the Casa Sostegni almost opposite the house of Lorenzo with orders not to move or take notice of anybody he might see go in or come out ; but after a while this man became weary and departed †. When the Duke reached Lorenzo's chamber where a cheerful fire blazed in the chimney, he unbuckled his sword and threw himself on the bed : Lorenzo hastily seized on this weapon and winding the belt tightly round it so as to prevent its being drawn, placed the sword under Alexander's pillow and advised him to take some repose ; then quitting the chamber he shut the door, which closed with a spring lock. Finding Scoronconcolo below he said with a joyful aspect, "*Brother this is the time ; the enemy I told thee of is now in my chamber ; and sleeps !*" "*Let us*

* Segni, Lib. vii., p. 122.

† Lorenzo's house occupied a great portion of the northern half of the

Riccardi palace in Via Larga, a full third of the present building having been added by that family.

go then," answered the bravo. When they came to the landing-place of the stairs Lorenzo turned suddenly and said, "*Heed not his being the Duke's friend. Mind only to strike surely.*" "*I will do so,*" muttered the other, "*even were he the Duke himself.*" "*Thou hast guessed it,*" returned Lorenzo with a smile; "*he cannot escape us; let us go.*" "*Let us go,*" echoed Scoronconcolo. They reached the door; the latch was lifted and fell again without opening; a second attempt succeeded: Lorenzo entered; and saying, "*My lord, are you asleep?*" instantly stabbed him through and through with a short sword. The Duke who lay asleep or as if he were so, with his face turned from them, on receiving this bloody thrust rolled over, and even off the bed on the further side, endeavouring to escape towards the door after having snatched a stool up to defend himself; but Scoronconcolo met him with a slash across the face which gashed his temple and split the greater part of his left cheek, while Lorenzo pushing him back upon the bed threw himself on top of him, and to prevent cries thrust his left hand into the Duke's mouth, saying, "*Do not be afraid my lord.*" The unhappy prince in his agony bit Lorenzo's thumb with such force that falling flat upon him and unable to use his sword the latter called on Scoronconcolo for assistance. The murderer was perplexed, and moving now here now there, tried in vain to wound Alexander without hurting Lorenzo, so close and hard was the death-struggle between them. At length when almost despairing, he drew a short knife and suddenly plunging it into the Duke's throat worked it round and round like a gimlet until he died. Three other wounds made them sure of their victim, and then the chamber ran with blood. During all this time the prince never spoke (though it has been otherwise related) but held Lorenzo's hand with the rigid bite of death until the ebb of life released it. They first dragged the mangled body to the floor, then steeped in blood replaced it on the bed, and after covering all up Lorenzo staggered exhausted

to the window and dared to breathe the air of heaven after so fiendish an exploit !

The noise of this long death-struggle was plainly heard, especially by Maria Salviati the grand Duke Cosimo's mother who inhabited the same building ; but no one moved, because Lorenzo expressly for the purpose, had long been continually assembling parties of young men to play all sorts of tricks in this very chamber where they pretended to quarrel and fight running here and there and shouting out "*Strike*," "*Kill him*," "*Traitor thou hast murdered me*," and such like expressions, so that the noise was a common occurrence and passed unheeded. When Lorenzo was a little recovered he ordered Scoronconcolo to call in a boy who from his crookedness was ironically called "*La Freccia*" or the arrow and showed him the bloody corpse, which he instantly recognised and would have screamed out for help had he not been prevented. Why Lorenzo did this it is difficult to conceive, he never told his reasons to Varchi, but from the moment he had given the death blow, says that author, until he was himself murdered many years after in Venice, not only nothing prospered with him but he never even did anything that was worthy*. After taking the keys of his chamber and receiving some money from his steward Francesco Zeffi, he left the house with Freccia and Scoronconcolo and procuring a licence for post-horses from the Bishop Agnolo Marzi of Assisi who managed that department, made directly for Bologna. His excuse to the bishop was the dangerous illness of his younger brother at the villa of Caffaggiuolo, and no suspicion was raised about the movements, however untimely, of the duke's favourite companion. At Bologna his wound was dressed and he related all that had occurred to Salvestro Aldobrandini who held a high judicial office in that city ; but he was not believed, and continued

* Feeling, as he must have done, the general suspicion entertained of him, he probably wished to make use of "*La Freccia*" as an additional and probably more credible witness for his veracity than either himself or Scoronconcolo.

his flight to Venice where he arrived on Monday night just eight-and-forty hours after the murder. There too he had infinite difficulty in convincing Filippo Strozzi that Alexander lay a corpse within the chamber of which he produced the keys; but finally he was embraced, called the "*Florentine Brutus*," and promised the two sons of Filippo as husbands for his sisters who were well known for their extreme beauty and virtue*. About one of them we have another story connected with Alexander's murder and said by Segni to have come from Lorenzino himself†; namely that he promised to bring his sister Laldomine, the young and beautiful widow of Alamanno Salviati to the duke, knowing that the latter wished for a son which he could be certain was his own. Lorenzo promised to take the first opportunity that his mother's absence presented to fulfil this desire and she had that day gone suddenly into the Mugello to attend his young brother Giuliano, leaving Laldomine with another sister at the residence of his maternal uncles the Soderini‡. He probably amused the duke with a double hope; for his art, secrecy, and long continued perseverance are as astonishing as the resolution with which he finally brought this bold and bloody tragedy to a close.

Thus ended the short cruel and tyrannical reign of Alessandro de' Medici Duke of Florence, the first taste of a bitter potion to be swallowed by his countrymen! He was a fit companion for Phalarus, Nero, Ezzelino, and other bygone tyrants, for as we are told, only one of these attempted to murder his own mother, which Alexander is reputed

* *Lettere di Principi*, vol. iii., folio 161.—*Origine e Descendenza della Casa de' Medici*, MS., folio 181-196.—Nardi, *Lib. x.*, pp. 319-21.—Ammirato, *Lib. xxxi.*, p. 436.—Paulo Giovio, *Lib. xxxviii.*, p. 499.—Segni, *Lib. vii.*, p. 122.—Varchi, *Lib. xv.*, pp. 268-274.

† Varchi, and the MS. cited, "*Origine e Descendenza della Casa de'*

Medici," in the author's possession (where are to be found Lorenzo's apology, and letter to Francesco di Raffaello de' Medici), have been followed in this narration, for they both agree almost verbally; other accounts vary in many particulars, but the leading facts are alike in all.

‡ Segni, *Lib. vii.*, p. 123.

to have accomplished lest she should have been shown to Charles at Naples as his future kinswoman; and probably none of those tyrants found more apt and willing instruments of cruelty than Florence supplied to this one*. Had Lorenzo's own character been good he might perhaps have roused the citizens to a sense of personal dignity and to liberty; but he was shunned and hated; none would believe that the Prince's pander and parasite could be the friend of freedom and the people; and it is difficult to think that a man who loved Freedom for her own sake could have feigned so long and so debasingly as to make his very exploits in her cause almost render the name of liberty odious, or at least a subject of reproach instead of glory and dignity. But whatever might have been his hidden motives, Lorenzo did marvels in the circumstances where he was placed: he exhibited the most astonishing and long-continued art, the most undaunted resolution, the most impenetrable secrecy, and the greatest judgment in his choice of time; just at the moment when Vitelli with most of his troops were absent and no force of consequence left in the city to suppress revolt! He could not have communicated his plan to honest men, for scarcely one would have trusted him, and therefore could make no preparations inside; but the soul of Florence was without, for the spirit of her inmates was crushed by tyranny and everlasting fear†. He could not confide in them, and still less trust the exiles with his secret through apprehension of discovery, but believed, when the deed were once done, that they would have the will and the spirit and the means to follow up this blow. The first and greatest object therefore was to destroy the tyrant and this Lorenzo accomplished all alone, leaving to citizens and exiles the task of improving so far an opportunity: he failed for want of

* "*Apologia di Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco de' Medici contro a coloro che volendo la Tirannide lo biasimavano dell' avere ammazzato il Duca*

Alessandro," MS. In possession of the author. (Fol. 215.)

† *Apologia di Lorenzo de' Medici.*

previous character: Timoleon was applauded because his motives were appreciated; yet he murdered his own brother! In a letter from Lorenzo to Francesco di Raffaello de' Medici dated at Venice the fifth of February 1536 (1537) he endeavours to justify his proceedings after the murder in the following words.

“ Since I left Florence I have written to nobody, thinking
“ as generally happens in such cases, that what I have done
“ will by some be applauded and by others blamed: to the
“ former my conduct wants no justification, and to attempt it
“ for the latter would be only waste of time, because if the fact
“ itself is insufficient to excite them words will scarcely avail.
“ But knowing well how much you are attached to me and how
“ much you may believe I am so to you; in whatever way the
“ transaction may be related it seems good that you should
“ know my mind, in order to have the satisfaction of feeling
“ that you have a friend who thinks that it has done nothing
“ dangerous to him in the eyes of those whom he is willing to
“ serve for the public good; and in order that you may defend
“ me against those who seem to think I first did well but pro-
“ ceeded afterwards ill, and who therefore may charge me with
“ want of spirit and judgment; yet if they consider well it will
“ be seen that I could not have acted otherwise than I have
“ done. You can easily imagine what a dangerous thing it
“ would have been to intrust any one with such secrets;
“ but I failed in nothing that I could possibly do to discover
“ the sentiments of those whom I thought of most importance
“ and who I felt assured would not be wanting to their country
“ in such circumstances, even when the tyrant was alive; but
“ when dead I could not believe that they would be false to
“ themselves. The having or not having been done in time is
“ of no consequence, because these are things that must be
“ executed when we can, and not when we will; although in
“ reasoning the thing I should have right on my side, because

“ the execution of it now, or before, when Cæsar’s affairs were
“ prospering and he himself in Italy, returning triumphant
“ from Africa, seems to give occasion for those who never
“ wished for liberty to use this covering for their turpitude. In
“ deferring it there would have been many risks, or rather the
“ manifest ruin of the city ; for you know that nothing was
“ thought of but extravagance and grinding taxation without
“ any profit. And in choosing a moment when the Seignior
“ Alexander Vitelli was absent I think I gave a fair oppor-
“ tunity for those citizens to recover their superiority over the
“ city and to think of some method by which they might rid
“ themselves of him. With regard to my flight, my not having
“ aroused the citizens, or my failure in activity after the event ;
“ all that which has subsequently occurred demonstrates that
“ I should have done no benefit to my country and have sacri-
“ ficed a life which I now reserve for her disposal. However
“ I intended to do so ; but my blood which flowed in vast
“ quantities from the hand which the tyrant had bitten, made
“ me apprehensive of discovering that, by traversing the town,
“ which it was so necessary to conceal for a time if I wished to
“ succeed in my enterprise ; and thus I resolved to abandon
“ Florence for those parts where I could not fail in my
“ exertions to aid the cause. But as evil fate decreed, the
“ first person I met at Bologna, Salvestro Aldobrandini, would
“ not believe me, and thus time was lost in hurrying forward
“ to find some person who would. I afterwards went to
“ La Mirandola to see if any person was there, and with
“ some danger I passed by suspicious places in the confident
“ hope that the thing could not fail ; and it did not appear
“ possible that after so many evils the Florentines might
“ not be united, especially as I knew that the leaders were thus
“ inclined, and disposed to act so that every one should have his
“ due position ; and it appeared to me that, all suspicion of
“ tyranny being removed, this might easily succeed ; as it cer-

“ tainly will if they have confidence in each other and will believe
“ that good men prize their country’s welfare above everything,
“ and do not cloak their own appetites by declaring that they
“ act as they do, merely because they can do no better. Never-
“ theless I hope that one of those best informed of the truth
“ will be able to dress the ulcer ere it gangrenes and has occa-
“ sion for stronger remedies ; for you know that the stronger
“ remedies while they carry away the vicious matter also carry
“ away much of the good, and to that degree which makes me
“ doubt whether the evil or the medicine be most desirable,
“ seeing the misery to which our poor city and its dominion
“ have been reduced. But with all these things I do not com-
“ plain of my fate ; believing as I do, that I have shown to
“ the world how devoted I am to my country, as well as my
“ manner of proving that I am so ; and I do not think I have
“ lost too much in being driven from a country which cares
“ so little for liberty ; having also this satisfaction, that it cannot
“ again be placed under a tyrant. If I thought this letter
“ would bring you into any trouble you may be sure I never
“ would have written it, but I cannot yet understand that
“ we are in such a sad condition as to be deprived of speech ;
“ however when you have read it the flames will soon place you
“ in security because it will then have finished its travels.
“ Every time that I have given vent to my real sentiments in
“ your presence I thereby showed the perfect confidence I have
“ in you, and holding it for certain that in my present condition
“ you will vindicate my honour and defend me wherever it be
“ necessary with full credit for my motives, which I believe
“ you have long known, such has been our intimacy. And if
“ it happen that meeting with my detractors and discoursing
“ about me you may be overpowered by their arguments, I will
“ send you my “*Apology*” written not only against them, but
“ also against those who still tenaciously adhering to tyranny
“ blame me without measure ; which apology if you will deign

" to read, and by means of copies place in the hands of our dear
 " friends who are lovers of liberty, both you and they can with
 " the foundation of defence and argument therein established,
 " contradict the others and protect me from the calumnies they
 " so impudently bestow, urged on, as they are, only by the
 " recollection of the profits they have lost, and which they
 " drew from the tyrant, to blame my most praiseworthy actions
 " which had no object but the emancipation of my beloved
 " country. And now without saying more I will make an end
 " by assuring you that in all circumstances I shall be the same
 " to you as I have hitherto been, and to you and to your father
 " I recommend myself. " LORENZO DE' MEDICI ".*.

" VENICE, 5th February, 1536."

This letter, which seems to have been composed in haste and agitation, says something but not a great deal for Lorenzo's flight: the bleeding hand did not prevent his going to the Bishop of Assisi for post-horses: the deed he had done would almost seem to have overpowered him: he was a Medici, and easily accomplished the treacherous portion of the enterprise, but failed, (if it were indeed his fault) in the noble and the generous part: he was but three-and-twenty when all this was done, yet he had already such a character that none gave him credit even for treachery when avowed by himself; nay even Filippo Strozzi hesitated to believe, for assuredly the intelligence was startling: but Lorenzino must not be condemned too severely; he was probably right in judgment though unsuccessful in the result and was moreover celebrated with enthusiasm by all the orators of the day, to whom tyranny and freedom were fertile sources of elocution †.

* *Origine e discendenza della Casa de' Medici*," folio 200, MS. I have never seen this letter in print, nor even alluded to by any historian.

† The enthusiasm with which this exploit was received in Italy may be

seen in a letter to A. M. Paulo del Tosso, from his brother G. D. at Rome, 15th March, 1537 (given in the "*Lettere di Principi*," vol. iii., folio 162). —Varchi, Lib. xv., p. 394.

Yet his country rose not to the call of liberty ; the sound of freedom struck faintly against the silken curtains of luxury, and expired in the chambers of the great ! The Florentine people were then delivered from a far worse man than Cæsar only to bow their necks to a more fearful tyrant than Augustus. When a country is ripe for freedom there is no need of the assassin's knife ; when it is not, the death of a tyrant will not bring it : tyranny is a Hydra, the offspring of license and corruption, but liberty and slavery are in the heart of man, not in the murderer's dagger or the imperial mantle !

Giomo and L'Unghero unable to find their master in any of the convents or other usual scenes of licentiousness, at last sought him, though hopelessly, in the duchess's palace ; they then repaired to Agnolo Marzi's residence and thence a messenger was despatched to Cafaggiolo where Lorenzo had been seen to pass, with three companions ; the post-guide being one. Little doubt now remained on their minds of the truth and they immediately communicated with Cardinal Cibo nephew of Leo X. whose kinsman had as related attempted the life of Alexander. Calling the chief secretary Campana to his aid Cibo decided on allowing all things to proceed as though the prince were living and those who came to the palace were told that he still slept ; Alessandro Vitelli was instantly summoned from Citta di Castello, Lorenzo Cibo with his forces from Pisa ; Jacopo de' Medici commissary of militia received orders to be on his guard at Arezzo, and the chief of the Mugello Bands was commanded instantly to Florence which was at the moment destitute of troops and government, and helpless against the slightest popular movement. The duke's body was then secretly removed to the sacristy of Saint Lorenzo and Vitelli's arrival on the eighth of January secured general tranquillity. Every citizen rejoiced at the event, but each was doubtful and afraid to move until Vitelli's presence precluded all resistance. The populace were sorry, for he amused them with festivals and diversions, was

free and popular in manner, made some striking exhibitions of justice and generosity which took with the crowd; and in general administered the laws as connected with that class fairly and impartially: they neither obstructed his pleasures or powers, and their good will strengthened him, besides under the civic ascendancy they had many oppressors, in him only one, and were moreover beyond the pale of *direct* taxation, a circumstance apt to blind many to its concealed pressure. The senate, now considerably reduced in consequence of Alexander's habit of never filling up vacancies, assembled under the cardinal's direction, and Domenico Cangiani immediately proposed the election of Giulio natural son of the late duke: this was opposed by Guicciardini who named Cosimo of Medicis then about eighteen, and popular as the offspring of the celebrated Giovanni chief of the "Black Bands"*. Palla Rucellai made a stout opposition to both; declared that as Providence had vouchsafed them so fair an occasion of recovering their freedom it would be madness to neglect it, that no definitive step should or could justly be taken without the exiles who had an equal right to discuss the national destiny. Most of the senators were also of this opinion but they still shrunk from the frowns of Guicciardini, Vettori, Acciaiuoli, and Strozzi; the four great instruments of ducal oppression, who felt that their only safety was in the sceptre of a powerful monarch. Rucellai however persisted and much confusion ensued until a final resolution placed Cardinal Cibo for three days at the head of the government. This was very unpopular for none confided in him; he had neither courage skill nor ability, and was more ready to fly from popular opinion than remain to direct or oppose it. The city now became agitated; circles and groups of citizens began to assemble; sparks shot forth here and there; public affairs were earnestly discussed; a reëstablishment of the Seignory talked of; the gonfalonier proposed, and the general ferment rapidly augmenting. Alamanno

* Varchi, Lib. xv., p. 287.

Salviati a young and wealthy citizen nearly related to the Medici assembled many of his friends* by night to discuss the condition of Florence; Bertoldo Corsini declared that although holding a high office he conceived that Alexander's death released him from all allegiance, that their duty was now to secure the safety of their country, that they should arm the Florentine youth; for which he offered the stores of the citadel where he commanded as "*Provveditore*;" and thus free their country before Vitelli's arrival. But Alamanno who was given rather to pleasure than politics and far from steady, advised the gaining of Vettori and Guicciardini to their side and the former pretended acquiescence while he amused them until Cardinal Cibo's nomination had past the senate. Still public spirit was awakened amongst the poorer citizens who whenever any of the great walked past their shops would strike their tools on the tables and benches and call out in a loud voice, "*If you gentlemen do not know how, or are not able to act, call upon us and we will do it.*" This alarmed both Guicciardini and the cardinal, for a leader alone seemed wanting to complete the revolution: just at this moment Cosimo who had been absent at Trebbia in the Mugello, suddenly appeared in Florence with a few attendants and was tacitly but generally received as the successor of Alexander, because Lorenzino, who was really next heir according to the imperial decree, had forfeited all his rights by the murder. Cosimo's first act on coming back was to visit Cibo who, as he could not exalt Giulio whom he expected to have charge of, at once joined Guicciardini and received the young Medici with open arms. Adherents rapidly augmented and Guicciardini in order to give the exiles no time, held a secret nocturnal council with Cibo, Vitelli, and the other chiefs, who resolved, even by the employment of force if necessary, to assemble the Senate and declare Cosimo not duke but chief of the

* Their names were, Pandolfo Martegli, Filippo Manuelli, Antonio Niccolini, Batista Venturi, Bartolommeo

Rontini, and Bertoldo Corsini, the *Provveditore* of the fortress.

Florentine republic. Next morning the whole city was still agitated and the friends of liberty confused and intimidated on seeing the Medician palace, the Via Larga, and all that neighbourhood bristling with spears and partizans, a plain proof that the government was settled without them. Cardinal Cibo now sent for Cosimo, but he was detained by his mother whom late events had alarmed, and he with early but profound dissimulation concealed his ambition under so calm and modest a demeanour as to provoke the contempt of his friends, until turning with much humility to his parent made them a moderate but very spirited reply and then repaired to the cardinal.

By this time the Senate had again met, and Cibo first taking Cosimo into the balcony which overlooks Saint Lorenzo, made him promise to render impartial justice; not to separate from the emperor; to revenge the murder of Alexander, and finally, take care of his children Giulio and Giulia*: then quitting him Cibo proceeded to the council where in compliance with the imperial decree he proposed Cosimo as Alexander's lawful successor, without any restriction. The Senate however was far from unanimous, and even his most active partisans neither assented to nor entirely dissented from the proposition: conditions and difficulties were interposed; Palla Rucellai who was a friend of Filippo Strozzi's, boldly and energetically exclaimed that he would no longer have dukes nor lords nor princes in the Republic; and to prove his sincerity snatched up a white bean which showing to all the assembly he exclaimed, "*This is my vote*" and dropped it into the ballot-box. Vettori and Guicciardini immediately attempted to intimidate him as they had done others the day before, and reminded him that his white bean was after all but a single vote; to which he promptly answered; "If you have already debated the question and pre-determined to carry it, there was no necessity to send for me."

* There were in all three children, Giulia married, first, Lodovico Cantelmi, secondly, Bernardetto de' Medici: Giulio, Giulia, and Porzia. The latter, probably posthumous, was a nun: Giulio married Livia Spinola.

So saying he rose to leave the assembly but was gently retained by the cardinal who beseeched him to consider the consequences, surrounded as they were with armed bands of unscrupulous soldiers ; to which he only answered ; " that he was more than " seventy-two and but little evil could now befall him."

During this altercation the four chief actors with Matteo Niccolini all coolly retired to another chamber and, as previously concerted, drew up the following conditions. " That Cosimo di Giovanni de' Medici was to be entitled Chief and Governor of the Florentine Republic ; that when absent from the city he was to appoint a lieutenant who should be a native, and that he should have a salary of 12,000 florins : a council of eight was appointed to assist him without whom he could not open public letters or transact business ; and as Guicciardini, Vettori, Acciaiuoli, Strozzi, and Niccolini were to be members, their intentions became very evident and were not lost upon the young but penetrating Cosimo. Still there was considerable opposition, especially from Francesco Valori and Giovanni Corsi, and the question might yet have failed had not Vitelli who stood armed before the entrance and heard all that passed, ordered a tumultuous movement of the troops and a clash of arms while a voice was heard at the chamber door calling loudly, "*Despatch, despatch quickly, for the troops can no longer be restrained.*" These hints showed the futility of opposition ; the question therefore passed, and Cosimo appeared amidst military shouts of "*Palle!*" "*Palle!*" "*Cosimo!*" "*Cosimo!*" but still maintaining the most humble demeanour, to accept his new dignity and thank the "most loving and excellent Seigniors for so high a favour ; to assure them that such thanks were only to convince them that young as he was he would ever keep in view together with the fear of God, both honesty and justice ; that he never would injure anybody either in honour goods or person, but rather defend them from oppression ; and that state affairs should be directed by

"the counsel and judgment of their most prudent and most judicious lordships to whose opinion everything would be offered and recommended"*.

To honour the new sovereign and revenge the old, both soldiers and populace instantly began to plunder the houses of each: these dwellings were almost under the same roof as the Medici palace and filled with statues, bronzes, rare books, and antiquities: all were carried off in despite of every attempt to prevent it, and the greater part secretly or openly conveyed to Vitelli's quarters, the very man who began this Roman custom in Florence for his own private advantage †. 20,000 ducats' worth was thus plundered and a large breach made from the roof to the foundation equal to the space occupied by the chamber in which Alexander was murdered ‡. In the midst of all this tumult the citizens were everywhere to be seen in knots and circles angrily descanting on the election, and loudly blaming the apathy of the great, their want of patriotism, their ambition, avarice, and thirst of vengeance §. Thus ended the first act of the new tragedy.

Never was there a plot laid more deeply, worked more secretly, or finished more successfully than that of Lorenzo, and perhaps none more unskilfully managed after the fact; liberty being the object! Its very secrecy, the soul of conspiracy, damaged its action, for the event was startling, incredible, and took men by surprise ere they were able to improve their advantage. From the hour of Clement's death Lorenzo had resolved to accomplish it, and all his part was ably done: the ultimate failure was not his fault: he might, it is true, have risked everything and boldly exhibited his work in open day; but would such a course have

* Varchi, Lib. xv., pp. 283-295.

† Ibid., p. 295.

‡ This went quite through the building, and was called "*La Via del Traditore*." It is now occupied by the northern wing and small inner court of the Riccardi palace. (Vide

Lettere di Principi, vol. iii., folio 161, *G. D. al Fratello, A. M. Paulo del Tosso*.)

§ *Lettere di Principi*, vol. iii., folio 161.—Adriani, Lib. i., p. 18, &c.—Segni, Lib. viii., p. 139.

forwarded the cause? According to Varchi he excused himself with three reasons for not following up his blow within the city; namely that he did repair to the dwellings of many "Popolani," but by some was not heard and by others not believed; that he had ordered Francesco Zeffo to open the chamber betimes and then inform Giuliano Capponi and other liberals of what he saw there; and that Scoronconcolo scared at his own danger had lost his head and was incessantly urging him to fly as "*they had already done too much*"*.

Lorenzo himself certainly does not allege the two first reasons either in his "Apology" or in his letter to Francesco de' Medici, but avers that such was his intention. The praise or blame due to this sanguinary deed can only be measured by Lorenzo's real motives; things always hard to discover and often veiled from the actor himself, but which in this instance may, from various circumstances, be fairly supposed to have been the desire of emancipating his country. The sacrifices made by him were great; he was heir-presumptive to the duchy according to imperial decree; he risked his own life after a long and steady course of apparent turpitude which had already damned his living character and would, if he fell unknown and unappreciated, have consigned it to everlasting infamy. He sacrificed all his property, endangered the lives of his family, and set everything on the hazard of a die for the great object he had in view! His motive, according to some, was innate wickedness: in the opinion of others a wish to cancel his wild conduct and its shameful consequences at Rome; and in this he fully succeeded for even Molzi besides several others lauded him in public orations and in epigrams as the second Brutus†. Others again insisted that a thirst of fame, which in him ever appeared insatiable, was his real motive, especially as his mother was a Soderini and his father one of those

* *Lettere di Principi*, vol. iii., folio 161.—Varchi, *Lib. xv.*, p. 274.

† *Ibid.*, p. 304.

Medici so inimical to Piero di Lorenzo as to renounce their name and arms for those of the community by calling themselves "Popolani." Varchi thinks and probably with some reason that not one but all these motives contributed to the bold and bloody act: Lorenzo himself informed that historian of his having sometimes thought of stabbing Alexander with his own dagger in the market-place when mounted on the same horse, as frequently happened, but was deterred by apprehensions of his body guard; and on other occasions he was prevented by doubts of not effectively finishing him. Many hints from dreams, omens, and other prognostics were given to the duke, and some of them very remarkable; but in every case where Lorenzino was mentioned or described, the former instantly turned a deaf ear and neglected or ridiculed the information, for his fate urged him forward heedless of everything*.

Lorenzo in his apology, written after coming back from the Levant and subsequent to the disaster of Montemurlo, justifies tyrannicide by ancient example; as approved of and practised by the most virtuous men; and as disinterested patriotism, all of which rendered it not only excusable but the bounden duty of a worthy citizen. He asserts that the notoriety of Alexander's tyranny needed no proofs from him; declares and truly that the duke was only favoured by a few infamous men who preferred themselves to their country, yet could not gainsay his tyranny and that by all others he was detested. He supports the charges of tyranny and cruelty by declaring that amongst other acts he devised new methods of death and torture and that he actually walled up his victims so closely as to form one mass with the brick and mortar, administering sufficient food to prolong life and torment as long as nature would suffer them! Such a man instead of burning Perillus in his brazen bull like Phalaris, would have loaded the Athenian artist with honours and emoluments. His six years of tyranny

* Varchi, Lib. xv., p. 274.

rivalled the worst six years of the Agrigentine monarch, of Nero, or Caligula ; so many citizens had he banished ; so many persecuted ; so many beheaded without cause or process, only for vain suspicions or words of no importance, and so many had he poisoned or murdered with his own hand or by those of his satellites, merely because they had seen and known him in his lowest state of birth and nourishment. And when to this were added his extortions, rapacity, rapes, adulteries ; his violation of everything sacred or profane ; it became difficult to say which was most blameable, the impiousness and wickedness of the tyrant, or the despicable patience of the Florentines in so long supporting him ! Lorenzino then discusses the meaning of the word tyrant in the ancient signification and asserts, that exceeding, as he did, all the royal villains of antiquity and murdering his own mother without even a shadow of those reasons which moved Nero to the attempt, Alexander was no kinsman of his nor scion of the house of Medici, but the son of a common carrier's vicious wife ; and might have been the offspring of any man that happened by accident to meet her ; yet being born in wedlock he must be considered as a child of the carrier. In answer to the charge of infidelity he denies that he was a servant of Alexander's or received any benefits at his hands, but paid his taxes and tolls like every common citizen. Servants he adds are of two descriptions ; those that serve for hire, and slaves, *Fideli*, or *Vassals* ; but he belonged to neither, nor was he ever Alexander's friend any more than his kinsman ; he was not allowed to carry arms, and the duke with such mistrust could never have loved him or any body ; because having murdered his own mother and detested his cousin and youthful companion *Ippolito*, he felt no attachment to a human being but himself. Lorenzo declares that he exaggerates nothing either to excuse himself or aggravate the tyrant's crimes ; on the contrary he tells them in the most simple way that they may not seem more incredible than they really were ;

but what he asserted was notorious and still fresh in the public mind and memory. Tyrants have been murdered even by their own brothers and the action lauded: the laws of Florence not only permitted but compelled the son to accuse his father if the latter were attempting to usurp the rule and destroy the liberties of his country; and if so, was not Lorenzo justified, nay obliged to attempt the liberation of his already enslaved country, by killing one who had he even been a kinsman was at best a bastard, and distant five or six degrees? But if tyrants were to be considered safe from the dagger of every man they trusted, it would be good for *them*; seeing that they then would put confidence in all the world! As regarded his subsequent conduct, he says, that having determined to deliver his country, the first step was her tyrant's death, and thus far he felt himself competent to act alone; but afterwards some aid became necessary because he was without friends arms or accomplices; and in this necessity he could trust more to the outward and exiled than to the inward and enslaved citizens after witnessing the noble conduct of those at Naples and the vile submission of these at Florence; the former preferring death and exile to tyranny; the latter tyranny to liberty; the first armed and united, the last discordant and defenceless and many of them even wishing for a continuance of the tyranny, as subsequent events demonstrated. Some friends of liberty blamed him for not exhibiting the tyrant's corpse; but words he says would have availed nothing when such facts had been insufficient to arouse the citizens to a sense of their own degradation. "And "was I then," he asks, "to shoulder the mangled corse of "Alexander like a common porter and hawk it about the city "like a madman?" This could not be done, especially as Scoronconcolo (whom he here calls "*Piero*") was, after time for reflection, utterly confounded, terror-struck, and useless: they were in the midst too of Alexander's guards and servants, and the moon shone brightly: he could it is true have concealed

the bloody head under his mantle, but whom was he to address? not having a single friend in Florence that he could confide in or that would have believed him! for a severed head shows but little, and might not have been recognised by doubting and fearful men, especially in the hands of one who was supposed to be a devoted servant of the tyrant. Lorenzo's death in such a case would have been sure; and this would have given fresh spirit to Alexander's friends and thus have hurt the common cause: besides he was anxious to conceal the fact in hopes of collecting a body of exiles whose appearance before Florence and the discovery of the body should be simultaneous, and that this failed was not his fault. Others said that he should have called the guard, exhibited the corpse, and demanded of them to place him on the vacant throne as Alexander's legitimate successor (in other words trust to a body of troops paid by and devoted to their late master) and when once in power restore his country to liberty. But this must have been certain death with loss of honour and reputation, because personal ambition would then have apparently been his motive, not his country's freedom; and such being far from his own thoughts so would he have the belief of it far from those of others. But he owns that he would have been wrong in not taking one of these courses had he not expected that the exiles, acting in the same spirit as at Naples, would soon have completed the enterprise along with him. It would have been wronging them to have doubted this and he would have been rash had he not so acted. Lorenzo never contemplated such an event as the election of Cosimo, but had he done so it would not have altered his mode of action: it is easy, he says, to blame after the fact; but if the fault-finders had been actors they would have hesitated at the difficulty of exciting an enslaved people while a guard and a fortress were watching every movement, especially when all without the walls were known to be friends of liberty. And if the exiles had promptly advanced nothing could have with-

stood them, not even Cosimo's exaltation fresh unexpected and unpopular as it was! He indignantly repels the charge of a pusillanimous retreat through want of spirit to finish his work which he well knew from the first was deep and dangerous: he only went to Constantinople when every hope had withered, but even that voyage, he says, might have been useful had not his evil fortune still attended him. In conclusion, he asserts that he has more reason to boast of having emancipated Florence by leaving her without a tyrant than his detractors to aver that he failed in anything; because he not only killed the tyrant but promptly endeavoured to arouse those whom he knew could and he thought would do most for their country. "And am I to blame," he warmly asks, "am I to blame because I did not find in *them* that readiness and ardour which ought to have been found there? And what now can I do? Behold *what* I did alone! Did I fail there? Demand not of men more than they are able to perform, and believe that if I could possibly have brought all the citizens into such a frame of mind as was due to their country, that as I did not hesitate to destroy the tyrant as a means to my proposed end, nor to endanger my life, nor abandon my mother, my brother, and most precious things, and lay my house in its present ruin; believe that for the same end it would have been more easy to spill my own blood and that of my family, being very certain that neither they nor I could finish our lives more gloriously in our country's service" *.

COTEMPORARY MONARCHS.—England, Scotland, France, Spain, the two Sicilies, Austria, the Empire, and Constantinople, unchanged.—Pope: Paul III., 1534.

* Origine e Descendenza de' Medici, at length by Roscoe. *Life of Lorenzo*, MS.—The "Apologia" is published *Appendix*, lxxxiv.

CHAPTER II.

FROM A.D. 1537 TO A.D. 1540.

COSIMO I.

LORD OF FLORENCE.

COSIMO DI GIOVANNI DE' MEDICI's elevation at seventeen and a half years of age to the lordship of Florence threw a cold and withering shade upon the commonwealth; it blighted A.D. 1537. reviving hope and shut out the last beams of expiring liberty. After the opening burst of anger a deadly fear overspread the inhabitants: subdued, mortified, dejected, they wandered through the town with downcast looks ashamed of their own apathy and cursing their unhappy fate in being citizens of Florence a title once so glorious revered, and coveted! All felt ashamed that after such a tyranny so fair an occasion should be lost and that some few individuals against the general will were allowed again to place a yoke upon their necks.

Of all opportunities for recovering lost independence this had been the best; every one was weary of servitude; the elder Medician race the sovereigns of Florence were extinct, and those citizens who commanded the arms and the fortresses were not disinclined to, and could with ease have restored the commonwealth, yet almost all had shrunk from the proof; six heavy years of despotism had dislocated the joints of liberty and subdued that bounding spirit by which they once were moved. Deep execrations were breathed against the traitors, and above all others was Francesco Guicciardini anathematised with one loud and universal curse!

Noble in birth ; by some thought honest, and in theory virtuous ; his proud yet sordid nature chose rather to bow submissively to despotism than endure equality in a freer state, and he openly and shamelessly rejoiced in the success of his work. "*Let them,*" he unblushingly exclaimed, "*Let them murder princes, and in a moment their place shall be supplied by others.*" Besides his natural detestation of popular government Guicciardini exalted Cosimo because his own daughter Lisabetta was engaged to him in marriage ; and this circumstance coupled with the influence he had as he supposed, already gained over Cosimo by managing his great lawsuit with Lorenzino, flattered him with the hope of ruling Florence while the young Medici followed his diversions. He was mistaken : for Cosimo commanding as he did both troops and fortresses soon trampled on the parchment fetters of his power, and while he aspired to a more splendid alliance dashed aside both customs and counsels, especially Guicciardini's, and with the advice of Octavian of Medicis determined to assume absolute authority, to attach himself exclusively to Charles, demand his daughter in marriage, and so secure a despotic and unlimited sovereignty *.

Cosimo had previously been esteemed a boy of slow parts and rather timid disposition ; neither of them likely in a Medici and both inapplicable to him : he was in fact a true Medici ; bold, ambitious, able, and naturally deceitful. Under a calm reserved and even modest manner, well becoming his youth, he concealed the most aspiring thoughts, the most despotic notions, the most profound powers of dissimulation †. No man (for his very first acts were those of an experienced statesman, not a boy) no man was more jealous of power, and none had more confidence in his own ability to use it : absolute in temper, suspicious in nature, clear in his views, and resolute in following them, the boy-sportsman who was expected to continue his sylvan life

* Adriani, Lib. iº, pp. 19-20.—Segni, Lib. viii., p. 150.

† Vita di Cosimo, I., da Giovambattista Cini, Lib. iº, p. 17, Ed. 1611.

and leave older heads to govern, soon became the most dreaded statesman in Florence*. This was what Vittori wanted and he was honest enough to avow it, but Guicciardini played a deeper game and failed. One of Cosimo's first acts was an amnesty for the exiles, but scarcely a man took advantage of it except Donato Giannotti, and he finding himself insecure soon quitted Florence accompanied by Benedetto Varchi the historian who although not an exile seems to have attached himself for a while to Piero Strozzi, and even carried arms against the same Cosimo by whom he was subsequently so much befriended†.

During these transactions the Florentine cardinals Salviati, Pucci, Ridolfi, Gaddi, and Monti assembled with all the exiles then in Rome to discuss the affairs of their country. Communications were instantly held with Filippo Strozzi, who though extremely reluctant to venture purse or person was finally induced to enlist a body of men in the cause. His reasons were not without weight; more could be done he thought by compromise than arms, the war would be that of a public treasury against a private purse, and the latter his own; the success doubtful; the loss certain: he himself was no soldier; Vitelli could be bribed; and any agreement with the Palleschi short of pure tyranny would be advisable, more especially as they had the imperial forces close at their back and the French, except in promises, were doubtful and far away. Nevertheless while troops were rapidly assembling under the cardinals, secretly encouraged by Pope Paul; Filippo at the urgent requisition of the French ambassador moved from Venice to Bologna, enlisted three thousand men under Count Jeronimo de' Peppoli at Castiglione de' Gatti, and made every preparation to advance on Florence simultaneously with the Roman division of exiles. Meanwhile Cosimo bestirred himself; an envoy was

* Segni, Lib. viii., p. 146.—Adriani, Lib. iº, p. 20.

† Adriani, Lib. iº, p. 21.—Varchi, Lib. xv., p. 322.

instantly despatched to conciliate the cardinals and amongst them his uncle Salviati who on catching a distant glimpse of the pontificate through Cosimo's exaltation is said to have afterwards viewed national liberty in a different aspect*. **Monti** and **Pucci**, the first from indifference the last from private feelings at once fell off: messengers private and public were sent by Cosimo to the cardinals and to Salviati in particular: **Cherubino Buonanni** and **Bernardo de' Medici** Bishop of **Forli**, were commissioned to the emperor in Spain for the purpose of claiming his support and the hand of **Margaret**, together with possession of the citadel which **Vitelli**, who was in fact master of Florence, had occupied by treachery and held in the emperor's name. Justly doubting **Vitelli**, Cosimo put all his other strongholds in order; he rode through the city attended by **Alexander's** guard but only a few citizens, for the **Palleschi** were insecure, discontented, and plotting how to diminish his power; and the great body who were in favour of liberty would not expose themselves to the suspicion of having adhered to him: nor did they think his reign could last; nor was the memory of **Savonarola** or his prophecies yet extinct, but still strong and active in the minds of men and fostered by both monks and **Piagnoni**; so powerful an impression did that priest leave on the hearts of his followers! Many citizens quitted Florence; the people were in suspense and doubt, the machine so suddenly constructed was expected to fall as suddenly to pieces, and even the children and populace but faintly and timidly shouted the rallying cry of the **Medici**†. In this state of public feeling Cosimo had the gloomy prospect of an attack on the side of **Bologna** by three thousand regular troops besides a large body of exiles; on that of **Rome** by fifteen hundred; all directed by the power and moral influence of five cardinals assisted not only by **Valori**, **Albizzi** and the leading exiles,

* **Varchi**, Lib. xv., p. 311.—**Adriani**, Lib. iº, p. 24.

† **Varchi**, Lib. xv., pp. 297-9.

but secretly by Paul himself, and even by the king of France through his ambassador in that city.

On the other side the Marquis del Vasto now Imperial Lieutenant in Lombardy, on hearing of Alexander's death directly offered succours to Cardinal Cibo; imperial agents from all quarters flocked to Florence, and three thousand Spanish infantry besides two German companies were soon on their march from Genoa; not however to support the Medician so much as the imperial interests, or rather to subjugate Florence*. Against these difficulties and the sudden retreat of Margaret to the citadel with all her husband's treasure, Cosimo showed an undaunted countenance, and basing his operations on the dangerous imperial succours whose march he hurried as much as possible, determined to overreach the cardinals. The latter had now arrived at Monte Rosi and were advancing rapidly on Florence when the confirmed success of Cosimo's election startled them and turned Salviati's thoughts to higher schemes, as the first rumour of it had detached Monti and Pucci, neither being warmly inclined to the cause†. Ridolfi was still sincere and Salviati pretended to be so, yet retarded every movement towards Florence. At Montepulciano Cosimo's ambassadors met and finally persuaded them to quit their troops who were fast closing up under Gianpaulo Orsini da Ceri and Ruberto Strozzi, and proceed peaceably to Florence. To accomplish this Cosimo had promised to stop the forward march of the Spaniards, and on the other hand a note from Salviati ordered the disbanding of Filippo Strozzi's levies in the north‡. Yet the advance of the Imperialists so far from being slackened was hastened to the utmost, and the Marquis del Vasto was too ready on all occasions to support his master's authority against French influence in Florence

* Lettere di Principi, vol. iii., folio 161.—Adriani, Lib. i^o, p. 25.

† Adriani, Lib. i^o, pp. 40 and 2.—Cini, Vita di Cosimo, Lib. i^o, pp. 32,

33, 38.

‡ There is some discrepancy about the *exact* time when this note was written.

whatever faction might be uppermost. For this purpose numerous envoys were despatched there, amongst whom was the Abate Negro from Andrea Doria, and afterwards Bernardino Bishop of Aquila made his appearance, all charged with full powers to treat for the emperor*. Paul III. on the contrary entirely but secretly abetted the exiles, for he had a private quarrel with Alexander and cordially hated the Medici whose property at Ippolito's death he had seized, plundered, or given up to their creditors; and moreover was resolved on exalting the house of Farnese at all hazards. He had made his natural son Pier Luigi, Gonfalonier of the Church, from which he had already determined to sever Parma and Placentia as a dukedom: to accomplish this was difficult; but by making himself neutral between Charles and Francis he would be courted by both and the city of Novara had already been conferred on Pier Luigi Farnese by the former. Alexander who was thoroughly Ghibeline had exclaimed loudly against such equivocal conduct and called on him to declare himself, which coupled with the private enmity already existing made Paul not only rejoice in his death but become a more bitter enemy of his successor†. In the neighbourhood of Florence the cardinals, though their progress was retarded by every possible means, were treated most respectfully and honourably‡: Cosimo first sent Alamanno de' Pazzi to welcome their entrance into the Florentine states; then followed Matteo Niccolini and Luigi Ridolfi as ambassadors to request some clear exposition of their views and invite a calm discussion of what might seem best for the public welfare. At ten miles distance, on the representation of Cosimo through Boccale de' Medici, their followers were gently disarmed, but not without great suspicion and almost a retrograde movement on the part of the cardinals

* Adriani, Lib. i., p. 25.

† Varchi, Lib. xv., p. 302.

‡ Nardi differs from other writers, especially from Adriani, in the account

of their reception, and says that they were roughly spoken to and treated. (Vide Lib. x., p. 329.)

who feared foul play while Cosimo apprehended a popular rising against himself from the encouragement of their presence*. They however proceeded and were received by Cosimo in person at the gates: negotiations soon began and every means were made use of by Ridolfi and apparently by Salviati to persuade his sister that her son had better renounce the principality and retire to a private station. But though Maria was somewhat alarmed at the first announcement of Cosimo's exaltation in consequence of Alexander's recent fate, she had already rallied, and no less ambitious than he plainly declared to her brother that as the dignity was not sought by either but freely bestowed by Cosimo's fellow-citizens she would advise him in face of every peril to hold it and stake life and liberty withal: if he failed, the satisfaction of having been a sovereign would still be left, and to give his place up tamely would only show an ignoble mind and do no credit to either of them. On seeing this, Salviati who was thought to be the secret abettor of all, endeavoured to come to a compromise, but Ridolfi and Baccio Valori would hear of none and insisted on the old popular form of government with some restrictions. "But, Baccio," said Vettori, "what form do you intend to give to this new government of priors and gonfalonier?" Valori did not care what form provided that it were only free. "But," rejoined Vettori, "if you guard it with restrictions it will not be free; and if you do not, what will there be to prevent your being expelled by the people, and being thus forced to fly with disgrace from Florence?" "Then," angrily retorted Ridolfi, "do you Francesco want to commit an act of such wickedness as to set up a tyrant, so that none shall have liberty to think of the public good or the city's welfare?" And with equal heat Vettori answered, "Yes, this wicked act of setting up a tyrant must be accomplished, just because in these times we shall find no way that is a whit less wicked."

* Adriani, Lib. i., p. 26.—Cini, Lib. i., p. 39.

Thus ended the discussion but not without long and violent interruptions and insults from Vitelli's soldiers, all artfully excited by him and Guicciardini, who foresaw that the sword alone as in all such cases, would decide the difference, and that was exclusively in the hands of Vitelli who wielded it for himself and the emperor; he had the fortress, Margaret, and Alexander's treasures; the last of which he plundered; and was virtually master of Florence*.

Ridolfi and Valori then retired with the intention of bringing up their troops from Montepulciano but Salviati conjured them to take no decided step until he had made one more attempt at accommodation: the citizens who had hoped something from their arrival were disappointed; the insolence of Vitelli's troops and reënforcements had augmented to such a degree that they seemed, as they really were, masters of the town and the acclamations of the populace for Medician rule resounded on all sides; wherefore but little good was to be expected. This attachment of the populace was not undeserved; while they met only contempt and oppression from the rich and free citizens the Medici had always taken pains to court them and check such oppressions which thus to a certain point upheld justice between rich and poor: neither did this class feel any direct taxation; their markets were generally well supplied, and they were continually amused by small donations games and spectacles which gave both work and pleasure at the sole cost of the Medici, or rather of the public; but to the indirect source of expense which was themselves, these people never looked. Nevertheless, the fact seems undoubted that the Florentine populace and subject cities were at all times far more attached to the princes of the house of Medici than to the popular government of Florence†. Salviati had been urgent

* Adriani, Lib. i^o, pp. 26-33.—Nardi, pp. 153-6.—Cini, Vita di Cosimo, Lib. x., pp. 329-335.—Varchi, Lib. Lib. i^o, pp. 31-32.
xv., pp. 311-322.—Segni, Lib. viii., † Adriani, Lib. i., p. 14.

with his nephew, not indeed to give up the lordship of Florence, but to renounce the imperial party for that of Francis, as being more certain and beneficial : but Cosimo saw too clearly into the difference of character and abilities of these two monarchs, therefore adhered to Charles ; and is moreover said to have utterly confuted all Salviati's reasoning on the subject *.

The three cardinals' movements after all negotiation had finished are variously narrated, but the result according to Segni and Cini was a sort of compromise with Cosimo signed by the exiles, by which they were declared free to return ; the Montepulciano forces and all other levies to be disbanded, Cosimo continuing to rule under existing limitations, and the Spanish auxiliaries then near Florence to be remanded. Salviati remained in the city, the other cardinals retired for a while to the country but finally quitted their villas with Valori for Bologna : the exiles' force was dismissed, but they themselves feared to return, and the Spaniards instead of retiring were brought hastily up and quartered round Fiesole. Salviati's repeated attempts to influence Cosimo awakened his mother's apprehensions ; she believed that Guicciardini and other counsellors might be won by him and therefore promptly informed Vitelli that unless some means were found to remove her brother all would be ruined and the emperor lose Florence. Vitelli though somewhat startled at such a hint from a sister, instantly marched a thousand men to Salviati's house, occupied the doorway, stairs, and ante-chamber ; commanded the troops to clash their arms as if in tumult and so alarmed the cardinal that he decamped next day and finally joined his companions at Bologna†.

It has been said that on Alexander's death the Duchess of Florence had fled with all her treasure to the citadel, and that Vitelli seeing his advantage in commanding both, had succeeded

* Adriani, Lib. i^o, p. 29.

pp. 43-44.—Varchi, Lib. xv., pp. 320-

† Ibid., p. 33.—Cini, Vita, Lib. i^o, 21.—Segni, Lib. viii., pp. 156-158.

by stratagem in his object. He knew that the governor Paulantonio da Parma was a weak and careless man, and had therefore managed to introduce some troops and a captain of his own as second in command. On the very night of Cosimo's election he requested a conference with Paulantonio at the gate, and as previously concerted, his officer, Meldola of Otranto, called out "*Traitor*" from the ramparts above: it was night: a slight tumult had been excited outside on purpose to draw Paulantonio nearer to the gate, whereupon Vitelli watching his moment gave him a jerk and shut him out altogether, then with Meldola's aid made himself master of the fortress. Immediately waiting on Margaret and Cardinal Cibo who had retired with her, he assured them that all was done with a view to their safety and the emperor's benefit: of the former there was small danger; the latter was true, but so mingled with Vitelli's personal interest as to become identical. He also endeavoured to justify this conduct to Cosimo who feigned acquiescence, Vitelli publicly promising both him and Guicciardini to hold the citadel for that prince and the Florentine government. The duke, for so he was already called, suppressed his anger and dissembled, yet was boldly counselled by Acciaiuoli to arrest Vitelli at the next audience and after casting him from the palace windows proceed at once to the fortress, marry the duchess by force and trust to an after-explanation with the emperor*. This was a daring act yet Cosimo seemed willing to venture, and by doing so would have saved himself a world of subsequent anxiety; but Guicciardini's fears of incensing the emperor made him prefer dissimulation and Vitelli proceeded triumphantly. With the assistance of L'Unghero, Giomo, and some imperial agents about the young and inexperienced Margaret Alexander's property was shamefully pillaged, a great part, especially of the money, remaining with Vitelli, to the amount of 60,000 ducats, besides

* Nardi, Lib. x., p. 326.—Cini, Vita, 299.—Adriani, Lib. iº, p. 21.—Segni, Lib. iº, p. 31.—Varchi, Lib. xv., p. Lib. viii., p. 148.

valuables of every kind equal to half that sum. Loading his mules with these, and other costly articles from the plunder of Lorenzo's and Cosimo's dwellings, this chief, who was illegitimate and a simple military adventurer, sent the booty to Citerna a town he once held for Clement VII. where he purchased extensively. By all this villany he made himself in reality master of Florence, for the imperial agents looked to him as a man on whom their sovereign's interests depended, and courted him accordingly; his insolence therefore became unbounded and when he visited Cosimo it was always with a strong guard. Nor was this power confined to Florence; at Pistoia where faction was up and bloody and in many other places he was represented like a prince by his minions and everywhere fomented divisions in order to make use of them when occasion required.

Cosimo thus fleeced and his property plundered for his own honour, had only the state coffers to supply both public and private expenses; and they were empty! The consequence was new loans and a more stringent taxation which ran the annual revenue up to 500,000 florins and bore heavily on a distressed and discontented people; yet with all this the salt tax was lessened and yielded a greater revenue*. Faction it has been just said was again rife in Pistoia according to custom when any great revolution occurred in Florence: Baccino Bracciolini, the chief of that family and the Cellesi, and leader of all the Panciatic faction was with Francesco Brunozzi in Florence at Alexander's death; hearing of it by times they instantly repaired to Pistoia and assembling the Panciaticchi related what had occurred, urged them to seize so auspicious a moment, and on pretence of supporting the Medici control Pistoia by driving their rivals with slaughter flames and devastation into everlasting exile. Such counsel was too gratifying not to be approved, too congenial not to be instantly adopted: they immediately armed; their youngest men issued forth with concealed daggers and stabbed

* Cini, Vita, Lib. i^o, pp. 49 and 62.—Segni, Lib. viii., p. 158.

every individual of the opposite faction that they met: fourteen principal enemies were thus silently despatched while pursuing their private business: then came the tumult: armed Panciatichi filled the streets; the Cancellieri fled in all directions, but neither private house nor public palace, nor tower nor temple nor altar, nor sepulchre, nor even the seat of law and justice itself could save them; some flew through the city gates, others leaped from the walls and fled towards Prato Florence and the neighbouring hills: yet all in vain! They were pursued everywhere; neither castle nor villa nor church nor convent availed against the knife of their enemies! Gavi-nana, San Marcello, Lanciuola, Crespole, Pupiglio, Cutigliano, all streamed with the blood of the Cancellieri; not of men alone, but women and children and infants in their cradle were promiscuously sacrificed to the Moloch of ambition, hatred, and private feud *. Giovan Filippo Sozzifanti an old man of seventy was tottering along on his stick endeavouring to save himself in the hospital of Ceppo when he was overtaken by a near relation belonging to the other set, and one of the Bracciolini exclaimed, "Let him go, he is old and cannot live much longer." "Then," answered the other, "*it is better that he should fall by my hand who as his kinsman will use him more discreetly and kill him with fewer wounds than others would do.*" And so saying stabbed him to the heart †.

These disorders affected the exiles: Baccio Valori scared from Florence by Vitelli's ferocious insolence when the latter was relieved from apprehension by the dispersion of Salviati's troops, had retired to his villa called "*Il Barone*" situated near Montale a stronghold of the Cancellieri faction belonging to the rich and powerful Gherardini, where many of the Pistoian fugitives had sought shelter ‡. Here he busied himself in nourishing the flame of their vengeance, and expecting Nic-

* Adriani, Lib. i^o, p. 22.—Varchi, Lib. xv., pp. 326-32.

† Michel' Angelo Salvi, Hist. di Pis-

toia e Fazioni d'Italia, tom. iii., Lib. xxi., p. 145.

‡ Ibidem, Lib. xxi., p. 146.

colaio Bracciolini with a detachment paid by Filippo Strozzi, he hoped to make a counter-revolution in Pistoia. This increased the alarms and suspicions of Salviati's influence in Florence as already noticed, and occasioned the final dispersion of the cardinals, who first joining Valori at his villa were again scared by Vitelli and fled to Bologna*. Here their consultations recommenced, but Filippo Strozzi, knowing that the main expense of war would fall on his shoulders and designing still to effect a compromise, was overruled; and Bartolommeo Cavalcanti, not an exile but disgusted with events at Florence, was by acclamation appointed ambassador to Francis I. He was to demand of that monarch as the protector of so many and so powerful a body of exiles, the open espousal of their cause and their restoration by force of arms, with an engagement on their part to hold Florence at his devotion. This was warmly seconded by the French ambassador at Venice who disbursed 40,000 ducats towards the commencement of war in Tuscany and as a diversion for the imperial armies in Piedmont where the French banners were fast retiring before them. Much promise accompanied this gift, but the Imperialists were too strong in Tuscany to allow of any hostile movement at that moment without more solid aid from Francis. About this time Piero Strozzi joined the exiles from Piedmont, where he had been making his first campaigns and gained laurels as a colonel in the French service, but now with his fiery intemperate spirit he subdued his father by threats and insolence, urging forward hostilities with all the unfledged confidence of a young and ardent candidate for military fame inflated by an incipient credit in the ranks of France†. His presence gave new strength to Valori and Antonfrancesco degli Albizzi, both strong for war but hitherto repressed by Salviati and Filippo Strozzi. The former expected great assistance from

* Cini, Vita, Lib. i^o, p. 46.Lib. xv., p. 339.—Cini, Vita, Lib. i^o,† Adriani, Lib. i^o, p. 35.—Varchi, pp. 47-9.

the Guelphs of Ecclesiastical Romagna * whom he had, as he thought, conciliated when governor; also from the mountainous districts of Florentine Romagna, and from Borgo San Sepolcro where the rival families of Picchi and Grazziani, the former thorough Medici, the latter guelphic and democratic, were as in every other Italian city, continually struggling for mastery. He was deceived; for not only did the Ghibelines oppose themselves in Romagna to any guelphic movement, but about Imola the memory of Caterina Sforza and Giovanni de' Medici, the father and grandmother of Cosimo, was still fresh and grateful amongst the number of old soldiers and other distinguished persons who had shared their hero's glory and his bounty, and strange to say, were still ready to acknowledge their obligations! All these now seeing their old commander's son, the boy whom in his adversity they would, while still unbroken, have taken into their ranks, taught him to tread his father's footsteps and ultimately take his place above them; now seeing him exalted but yet in want of aid, so far from countenancing any adverse movement they flocked to his ranks at Florence repressed every whisper against him in Romagna and gave prompt and constant information of all his enemy's movements †. Although some of this spirit was doubtless excited by prospects of subsequent benefit and perhaps promises from Cosimo, still it is gratifying to contemplate the influence that Giovanni of the "Black Bands" had acquired over every soldier that approached his person or who had ever in any way served under him. His daring courage and chivalrous character; his noble countenance; his unbounded generosity and utter want of selfishness; his justice, discipline, judgment, and discrimination in the choice of men; his fatherly care of the troops; his protection of their just rights and claims, and his uncommon military talents, all combined to secure this extraordinary influ-

* The factions and names of Guelph

and Ghibeline still continued in Romagna, but were little heard of else-

where.

† Adriani, *Lib. i.*, pp. 36-37. —Cini, "*Vita*," *Lib. i.*, p. 49.

ence ; for he died poor, and except in his military character, powerless. And although he seems to have been imbued in an eminent degree with the prevailing ferocity of that age and country, yet under all there must have been working an inborn grandeur of principle which preserved his memory so long after death in the heart of every man of every rank that ever bowed to his commands ; a sentiment which made them cling to his widow and infant son while in adversity with melancholy affection, by voluntarily offering themselves as protectors when their aid though serviceable was not only disinterested but dangerous to themselves. And it was a noble tribute when flinging into his grave the flaunting but victorious banners under which he had so often led them, they snatched his funeral standards in their stead, and made the sable foldings flutter with his living spirit, and resplendent with his glory *. Giovanni had acquired all this fame at twenty-seven years of age, in times remarkable for a contempt of morality and every other virtue, social or public, when opposed to personal interest, sensual appetites, or craving ambition : had he lived, the history of Italy and even of Europe might have taken another course and Charles the Fifth have been deprived of half his greatness.

The exiles' deliberations were not unheeded by Cosimo who with Vitelli and Pirro Colonna an imperial agent, besides other captains, put the whole territory into as good a state of military defence as money and circumstances would allow in the midst of so much adverse influence as these emigrants everywhere exercised †. Their first act under Piero's advice was an attempt on Castrocara which failed : Borgo San Sepolcro then attracted notice and a body of troops under Piero were levied at Filippo Strozzi's expense to surprise it through the instrumentality of Alessandro Rondinelli the Medician commissary coupled with a general hatred of the Pichi family by the inhabitants. The

* Cini, " Vita," Lib. iº, pp. 7-16. † Ibid., p. 51.—Adriani, Lib. iº, p. 17.

French ambassador urged this with the usual promises of money, troops, and open war, if the attack succeeded: it was worth a trial, for success would have shaken Cosimo if not toppled him from his yet unsteady position; even the very attempt ruffled him, for the Spanish forces whose insolence and ravages had exasperated and alienated all the lower Valdarno, though strong for active and offensive war were actually undermining his power by their licentiousness and the expenses necessary to check it. Florence, Pisa, Pistoia, Prato, Empoli, even the distant Montepulciano and other places required paid garrisons for their protection from these friendly troops: the cost became enormous; loans were exhausted; taxation was at a maximum, and even its very sources were dried up by the flight of numerous wealthy citizens with their moveable property; for all expected a revolution and the ephemeral duration of Prince Cosimo's power. On the exiles' side, hope expectation, confidence, and promises both from pope and king, all increased in despite of Salviati's and Strozzi's warnings, who both so strongly objected to war that they left Bologna along with Gaddi and Ridolfi and retired to Venice and Ferrara. Jacopo Spini had meanwhile succeeded Rondinelli as commissary at Borgo San Sepolcro; Piero however marched against that town with some hopes on the thirteenth of April 1537 which began the first act of open hostility against Cosimo. Bologna was at this time full not only of exiles but other emigrants from Florence, some however in appearance only and acting as spies for Cosimo: amongst these were Filippo Nerli and Jacopo de' Medici who feigned discontent while they transmitted intelligence: they were neither believed nor trusted by the exiles, but did mischief and altogether injured the cause*.

Spini meanwhile was active, and well supported with troops by Cosimo: Piero marched with great rapidity, exhausted his men by fatigue and hunger, arrived, saw himself overmatched,

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* Cini, "Vita," Lib. i^o, p. 54.—Nerli, Lib. xii., p. 296.

and retreated as rapidly as a tired army would allow. Attempting to occupy Sestino he was repulsed with loss by the people and peasantry; his troops soon dispersed from want, and he was compelled to take shelter at Belforte in the duchy of Urbino not only with the loss of funds, and reputation; but involving the ruin of a better enterprise under his brother Robert who with Gianpaulo Orsini da Ceri was leading an army into the upper Valdarno from Castel della Pieve; and moreover arresting simultaneous movements at Montecucoli and amongst the Cancellieri about Pistoia: a subsequent insurrection of Borgo San Sepolcro in consequence of the licentious pressure of Vitelli's troops would have given him another and surer chance of success had he known how to keep his men together; but all was lost by imprudence, and the failure restored both weight and equilibrium to Cosimo*. This prince was still more steadied by the return of his envoy from Spain with favourable accounts from Charles whose pleasure the Count of Sifonte was soon to make known at Florence.

After his defeat Piero Strozzi proceeded to Rome, but the mass of Cosimo's forces were moved towards the Casentino from an apprehension of that province becoming the seat of war, the Spaniards occupying Ponte-à-Sieve which cleared the lower Valdarno, and in consequence of this movement towards the capital rumours arose of a tumult in Florence; of Cosimo having been wounded and Vitelli killed: the whole country soon became agitated; Pisa ever eager for liberty was up in arms, and nothing but certain truth allayed the ferment; yet Fazio da Pisa, who had followed Vitelli's example and treacherously held Leghorn for the emperor, was in continual communication with the malcontents of the former city; and Girolamo da Vecchiano an agent of the pope's whose influence equalled Fazio's, also showed himself too busy and at the

* Adriani, Lib. iº, pp. 42-43.—Cini, Lib. iº, pp. 55-56.—Varchi, Lib. xv., pp. 341 to 360.

instigation as was supposed of Pierluigi Farnese and the Florentine cardinals he vainly endeavoured to seduce Matteo da Fabbriano governor of the citadel : Cortona and Monte à Sansovino also tottered in their allegiance and added greatly to Cosimo's embarrassments* ; Pistoian factions chimed in with deadly knell and all the country smelt of blood. Within the city the Panciatichi were victorious, and generally so without ; and when their rivals were suppressed they raked up ancient feuds and fought amongst themselves : having got command of Pistoia by the expulsion of their own partisans of the Brunozzi race, the Bracciolini and Cellesi at once declared for Cosimo with whose favour they expected to maintain the ascendant, while he, sending Luigi Guicciardini as commissary, was happy to keep Florence tranquil and retain her subject towns under any form of obedience †.

His task was arduous ; nevertheless the weakness, errors, and insincerity of the cardinals and leading exiles ; especially their allowing themselves to be duped by the ruling party when a vigorous effort would have crushed it ; first established Cosimo's authority, as the arrival of Fernando de Sylva Count of Sifonte confirmed his sway. In full senate on the twenty-first of June Sifonte produced the emperor's decree whereby Cosimo de' Medici was declared legitimate successor to Duke Alexander in the principality of Florence ; Lorenzo de' Medici, his brother Giuliano, and all the descendants of Pierfrancesco being deprived for ever of their right of inheritance on account of that duke's murder. In exchange, three things were demanded : first that the citadel should be delivered up as imperial property in consequence of the compact with Alexander at Naples : second that the dowry of Margaret, which had been acknowledged but never paid by Charles, should be returned to her as if it had ; and thirdly that the exiles might

* Adriani, Lib. i^o, p. 45.

† Adriani, Lib. i^o, p. 50. — Cini, "Vita," Lib. ii^o, pp. 57-62.

be restored and the government settled, so that they should be able to live securely at Florence. Sifonte came as ambassador, nominally to protect the widowed duchess and Cosimo's youth, but really to spy into the true condition of the state, to ascertain the bias of public opinion, and more especially the intentions of those citizens who had elected him, for the emperor had heard that in despite of appearances little concord existed amongst them ; but above all to ascertain whether in case of permitting that prince to inherit the power and titles of Alexander he could be safely trusted, and in addition Sifonte was to compare and estimate the various advantages of preserving the existing government or altering it wholly or partially according to the particular interests of his master. Such was Charles the Fifth's object, and he little recked who reigned while his own turn was served ; Cosimo knew this well and determined to acquiesce : a council was nominated to treat with Sifonte ; he invited the cardinals and exiles to send their deputies ; all were averse but Filippo Strozzi and Salviati, for popular government was not these leaders' object and the others knew that from Charles it was useless to demand it : however Donato Giannotti was at last despatched to negotiate but without full powers, wherefore Sifonte dismissed him roughly. He then found a prevailing inclination to France amongst the citizens, much diversity of opinion, and the elements of future discord ; so judging that an iron hand and a single arm would best uphold imperial authority and imperial interests, he promised Cosimo the title of duke, received the oath of fidelity from Vitelli and Fazio da Pisa for the two fortresses ; levied an annual contribution on the new sovereign in the shape of rent for the real property of Alexander until his widow's never-received portion should be liquidated ; ordered her to reside at Prato for a while, whence she removed to Pisa and thence to Spain, and having thus fulfilled his mission quitted the city*.

* Nerli, Lib. xii., p. 297.—Adriani, Lib. iº, pp. 51-52.—Varchi, Lib. xvi.,

War again became active between Charles and Francis, but the latter though he had repelled invasion had never penetrated beyond Piedmont, and even there had been compelled by Antonio de Leyva's successor the Marquis del Vasto to relinquish many of his conquests *. The acquisition of Milan in addition to Naples had given a vast preponderance to Spanish power, and coupled with imperial rights and privileges and the vicinity of that state to Germany had rendered Charles little less than absolute in Italy. Venice was on his flank but subservient; not only from her numerous points of contact with so superior a power, but by her recent losses and expense, and her now palpable decay proceeding as well from Turkish aggressions and Portuguese enterprise, as from the permanent establishment of transalpine nations within the Peninsula. She was however as yet independent and still strong, but better able to forbear than offend as she was wont before her strength had come into collision with more formidable antagonists. The church both from Italian territory and universal rents ought to have been powerful; it was once and could have continued so; but nepotism avarice and ambition had even then brought her down beyond what a still firm religious grasp on the world might have given reason to anticipate. She was shaken by heresy, by her ill-managed resources as a temporal power, and by the growing disregard of sovereigns and vassals for her sanctity as a spiritual one. Piedmont was become an arena for Spanish and French gladiators while her native princes looked down from their snowy mountains on the spectacle: Montferrat

pp. 368-375.—Segni, Lib. viii., pp. 165-169.—Cini, "Vita," Lib. ii^o, pp. 63-5.

* Ant^o. de Leyva died of sickness before Marseilles in 1536, while commanding Charles's unfortunate expedition against Provence. At the same time the Castilian poet, Garcilaso de la Vega was killed by some rustics

who defended a tower. The emperor naturally felt this loss, battered down the tower, and cruelly sacrificed its defenders to the manes of the poet, an act that Garcilaso himself, had he revived, could scarcely have avoided execrating. (Vide *Mariana, Somaria de la Historia de España, Anno 1536*, p. 349, *Madrid*, fol. 1678).

had devolved by female succession to the house of Mantua : Ferrara and other petty princes were rather suffered than reigning and no longer of weight except as military commanders : Siena still existed in strife and trouble, but nodded to her fall and was a mere imperial city : Lucca like San Marino was too insignificant to meddle with except as an occasional purse for the strong to loosen. Genoa after a variety of changes enjoyed something like independence under the auspices of Andrea Doria and with it more quiet liberty than she had almost ever experienced ; but still she was merely permitted to sustain an uncontrolled existence under the imperial eagle while the Gallic wolf was watching the moment to devour her, and Corsica had nearly crumbled from her grasp ; so that suspicion doubt and insecurity filled her measure as full as that of the other potentates of Italy. Florence was still whole, but worn weakened and exhausted, the plaything of her own children and the very foot-ball of transalpine sovereigns. The exiles had not yet given up all hope ; by their bad management they had spoiled a fair occasion, an almost certain chance not likely to return ; and being unable to maintain an army long at their own cost had recourse as we have seen to Francis. The Count of Mirandola still adhered to that monarch, offering his strongholds as garrisons ; and it was through this footing that the latter expected to reestablish himself in Italy. When Giannotti related the ill-success of his mission even Salviati and Filippo Strozzi were reluctantly compelled by the exiles, especially the younger ones, to support the general voice for war with all its consequences against Cosimo. The two great leaders of this party were Piero Strozzi and Bernardo Salviati Prior of Rome and brother of the cardinal, both of whom had liberty on their lips rather than in their hearts ; nor were the father and brother more deeply attached to it, but neither wished for war : it was an uncertain and costly game which Strozzi felt would waste the

only thing that gave him consequence in exile, but for this he was insolently taunted and rebuked by Piero and lost ground in the opinion of all his party. Nor did the cardinal escape better; a torrent of abuse was opened on his proceedings from the day he entered Florence and allowed himself to be duped into losing the noblest game that ever people played for national liberty. These reproaches forced both into the majority: Cavalcanti and Luigi Alamanni wrote sanguine letters about the French king's promises intentions and wishes for their outbreak, and even giving hopes of his personal aid in conducting them triumphantly to Florence: the French ambassadors at Rome and Venice confirmed and seconded these promises; the pope encouraged them, and every act was sure to prosper: this might have been had there only existed one good directing head, but all was equality and consequent confusion; a mixture of haste, self-indulgence, jealousy, and overweening confidence *! By the pecuniary aid of Francis, which was even more slender than his professions, eked out by the large though reluctant disbursements of Strozzi, four thousand infantry and three hundred horse were raised under the various orders of Piero Strozzi, Bernardo Salviati, and Capino di Capo of Mantua an experienced officer who by the French king's or ambassador's wishes was made commander-in-chief and Baccio Valori commissary; yet these appointments were not accomplished without heartburnings †.

Mirandola was appointed as the rendezvous, and there a great concourse of exiles and soldiers eager for employment were soon assembled but all as yet in disorder. The confidence of Valori was great and startling for a man of such experience and he infected Filippo Strozzi; they made sure of some movement in Prato, Pistoia and even Florence itself at the

* Cini, Lib. ii°, pp. 65-66.—Adriani, Lib. xii., p. 299.—Cini, Lib. ii°, pp. 66-67.—Segni, Lib. viii., p. 173.—

† Varchi, Lib. xvi., pp. 376-378.—Adriani, Lib. i°, pp. 53-54.—Annunziato, Lib. xxxii., pp. 448-9.—Nardi, Lib. x., pp. 339-40.—Nerli,

mere flutter of their banners, apparently forgetting the caution and ability of Cosimo, his numerous and well-disciplined soldiers, his skilful captains, and the vigilance of the imperial officers in all that affected their sovereign. On the other hand their own troops were new levies, inferior in numbers, unorganized, led for the most part by young and inexperienced men, abounding in jealousy and discord, and little obedient to command. There was no artillery, little money, no magazines, and their French supporters were far away while Cosimo had possession of the whole country and its resources, kept his men well paid and well supplied, and the German emperor at his back. The exiles' force was held together by promises, Cosimo's by discipline; the former was loose rash and enthusiastic, the latter grim compact and firm; and thus were they prepared to combat*.

Nor was this all; Filippo Strozzi had been in secret communication with Francesco Vettori and showed himself ready to make such a compromise as would have sacrificed liberty and been scouted by his countrymen; this too was undertaken with Cosimo's sanction who urged him to quit Valori, resist his sons, and wait for time and opportunity to settle the government but not force Cosimo into the imperial party or ruin the Florentine territory by war. All this was good and politic from Vettori and Cosimo; war was no doubt unjustifiable except for the stake at hazard, and the advice had its effect on Filippo's good sense, his age, his avarice, and his epicurean nature, which left no room for political principle or any other that interfered with its indulgence. Baccio Valori, Antonfrancesco degli Albizzi and other leaders were poor and disappointed men; Salviati a selfish and ambitious one; each, and many others along with them, had his private and special interest in conflict with the public good, and all were discordant; but the vast inflated mantle of

* Varchi, Lib. xvi., pp. 378-9.—Ammirato, Lib. xxxii., p. 449.—Adriani, Lib. i^o, p. 54.—Cini, Lib. ii^o, p. 67.

liberty covered everything and concealed their mutual deceptions and selfish unprincipled designs *.

Amongst the mass of fugitives were many of a nobler stamp and sincerer mind, but they were generally poor and powerless and dependent on the leaders: of these last Piero Strozzi, though rash and confident, was more frank and sincere than Filippo; he embraced, nominally at least, the broader cause of liberty and popular government and along with his young companions scorned all compromise: with them too he was eager for glory and war no matter where or for what cause was at that period congenial to the youthful spirit of the Peninsula.

As long as the exiles remained idle or confined themselves to mere discussion the personal objects of individuals were easily concealed; but when proceeding to action and the distribution of rank and emoluments, then the selfish spirit broke forth and obstructed any general united movement. Baccio's son Filippo became indignant at not obtaining equal rank with Piero Strozzi, and Valori himself was soon in high altercation with the main body of exiles about payment of the troops, for money was already scarce though the men were as yet unorganized, and the whole business and order of formation which he as commissary should have regulated and preserved, were thus interrupted and confused. He was a man of great consequence experience and ability, accustomed to conduct armies and rule provinces, but not to contradiction: he was moreover reduced by extravagance to his last florin and probably hoped to recover something, as he was wont, in an official capacity. Be this as it may; indignant at opposition he mounted with a few attendants and hastily quitting Bologna rode forward towards his villa of "Barone" near Florence. This accident alarmed the whole body of exiles, for Baccio was too great and useful a man to be spared, wherefore Filippo Strozzi was sent after him as the person most likely to bring

* Varchi, Lib. xvi., p. 378.

matters to an amicable conclusion and fetch Valori back to Bologna where his experience was wanted in the formation of the army. Great fear afterwards prevailed lest he or Filippo should fall into Cosimo's hands, for the latter did not overtake Valori until he had reached the vicinity of his own villa on Monte Ferrato; and then, far from being successful in his mission, was even induced to remain in a post so dangerous with their united retinue close to the Spaniards at Calenzano. Both were accused of dissimulation in this strange proceeding which was supposed to be a venture on their own secret speculations: they deceived themselves as to the state of public feeling, or rather as to the facility of its public expression and action in Florence; and each wished to have the preëmption, and anticipate the other in securing the popular voice in his own favour before the army arrived. Each too had his own interested views of politics and self-aggrandisement, and they so far blinded both as to make them run this risk while undervaluing the youth and prudence of Cosimo, and the insufficiency of his means. They were deceived by exaggerated reports of his troops being badly paid, unsteady, mutinous, and even ready to disperse at the least alarming accident; and to a certain extent there did exist both difficulty and danger to Cosimo, with no small apprehension of the result. But all this was compensated by skill, prudence and energy, by the military virtues and astuteness of Vitelli; the firmness of Cosimo himself, and the experience of Colonna and Sarmiento with their bands of Spanish and German veterans. Feeling insecure at the villa which was untenable Baccio and Strozzi repaired to an ancient castle of the Counts Guidi called Monte Murlo, which was afterwards strengthened by Castruccio Castracani; it was situated a mile distant but lower down on the same hill, and about three times that distance from Prato: here they resolved to await the army's arrival. This villa was then a country residence of the Nerli family who had turned the ancient citadel into a dwelling; but the old dilapidated walls

still encompassed the church, and as it was called, "*The palace*," which were near each other; leaving an open space of some extent before them commanded by the belfry tower and palace windows. The place had been originally strong but many years dismantled, and being no longer required for war was then loose and neglected; wherefore Caccia degli Altoviti an old experienced officer in Strozzi's suit proposed by a few hours' labour to make it tenable but was unheeded, Valori confidently replying, "We came hither in such haste on purpose to scare others, not to cower before them or show any signs of doubt or apprehension." Filippo Strozzi also trusted much to Niccolao Bracciolini with whom he was intimate and had paid and engaged him as before noticed to levy a band of auxiliaries for the exiles: through this chief Filippo expected (for he had made alluring promises about confirming the ascendancy of the Panciatichi) to gain the support of Pistoia. But Bracciolini was false; he amused them with professions and strove to entice them forward while he, who with all his brood was related and subservient to Vitelli, sent Cosimo intelligence of what passed and returned equivocal answers to Strozzi. Valori too had from his landed property considerable influence amongst the local population; he expected much and not without good reason from the Cancellieri faction which abounded on the side of Pistoia, and were frantic from the bloody and still continued persecution of their enemies who adhered to the Medici. But his confidence exceeded all bounds, even to the verge of folly or madness in so old and experienced a statesman, and it was naturally augmented by the great influx of friends and kinsmen from Florence and all the surrounding country who hastened to welcome them. Amongst these was Bestiale de' Gherardini the powerful Cancelliere chief of Montale, a stronghold about four or five miles from Pistoia, with a large body of armed followers, and Rati Rospigliosi with a company of effective soldiers, on whom devolved the guard of Monte Murlo.

Valori's confidence led him to make frequent excursions to the "Barone;" and, as if victory were in his hand, to design new buildings and agricultural improvements; but Filippo shared not this feeling, and much too clear-sighted to be at ease, complained and remonstrated against Valori's temerity while he lamented his own weakness for remaining.

At Florence this rashness was not believed, Cosimo being convinced that only a secret understanding with the Florentines or some of the neighbouring cities could have caused it, no other excuse appearing sufficient to justify such audacity. Vitelli and Colonna therefore moved the Spanish infantry from Calenzano near Prato to the Ponte alla Badia on the Mugnone under Fiesole, for the purpose of awing the Floréntines, and kept an eye on every movement of the enemy. At Bologna the marvel was no less than at Florence, none could tell why the two great leaders of the expedition thus exposed themselves and their cause to unnecessary peril; but in compliance with Filippo's request Piero Strozzi was promptly despatched with an incomplete and unorganized battalion or "*Colonnello*" of eight hundred raw soldiers to his assistance. Young, inexperienced, but full of ardour, Piero was soon infected by Valori, and instead of occupying and strengthening Monte Murlo took up a position by the foot of the hill at a place called "*Mezza Strada*" on the Prato and Pistoia road, where without attention to military rules he encamped negligently, allowing his young officers to quit their companies and lodge themselves more comfortably at a distance. Here their numbers were gradually increased by straggling detachments from Bologna, but all irregular and disjointed. The Mirandula division was more efficient: formed and led by experienced men; paid and officered under the superintendence of France; it soon became a complete though small army and comparatively formidable; and Cosimo, whose spies were almost ubiquitary, being well aware of this, determined to cut off those at Monte Murlo ere

the others arrived. A contadino or country gentleman of the Cancelliere faction called Pasquino Gherardi offered Valori to advance close up to Florence, hover about its neighbourhood, spy out all the enemy's movements and, especially if an attack were meditated, give notice by signal-fires from the hills ; but his offer was unheeded or despised as the ignorant conception of a rustic ! Not so did Cosimo act ; and Vitelli who had regular information from Bracciolini feigned great alarm ; persuading Cardinal Cibo to retire with the duchess from Prato to Pisa he made unreal preparations for a general relief of the garrison, ordered the Spaniards into Florence, received their baggage, arranged their quarters, and spread such a panic through the city that numbers of the most suspected fled and took refuge at Monte Murlo or in the vicinity. The Italian troops were kept under arms apparently ready to relieve the Spaniards at the out-posts towards Prato Pistoia and the Badia of Fiesole : all this lulled the exiles' anxiety about any unusual movement of troops while it intimidated or got rid of the leading malcontents of Florence and afforded opportunities for more deceitful spying. Bertino Strozzi was accordingly despatched amongst the fugitives under the mask of a friendly visit to his near kinsman Filippo whom in a discussion on public affairs he recommended to be firm as having already more than half succeeded ; he underrated Cosimo, disparaged his supporters, whom he described as disunited and alarmed, empty of cash, full of apprehension, and utterly inefficient. Regular reports of everything were sent by the perfidious Bertino to his master who was nevertheless uneasy : the soldiers' pay now ran low in despite of every effort ; their murmurs were loud ; the little scraped up to quiet them was drawn with difficulty from the citizens and less by force than prayer ; it was a crisis, and the fate of Florence and Cosimo now depended on Vitelli ; all were ready to fly if he were unsuccessful, and Francesco Vettori although an intimate friend of Filippo Strozzi exclaimed

that they must save themselves for there would be no mercy nor would even Filippo have power to protect them. At this moment the commonest prudence, the commonest skill, the smallest good management or the slightest attempt to gain correct intelligence might have restored the exiles ; but all was ignorance, imprudent confidence heedlessness and audacity ; and all was ultimately lost. From Bertino's information coupled with the perfect calm of Prato, Pistoia, and the surrounding country Cosimo, who was less alarmed than his ministers, resolved on his measures in conjunction with Vitelli and Pirro Colonna : at first he had feared some outbreak ; but was now assured of both these cities which had strong garrisons, the latter with a powerful ascendant faction in his favour, the former still smarting from the horrors of 1512, and in no disposition to run another chance of indiscriminate massacre. Neither had he any apprehensions for Florence after the troops were paid ; for all the most troublesome citizens had fled, joined the enemy, or were intimidated ; wherefore on the thirty-first of July 1537, Luigi Guicciardini received orders to send Federigo da Montauto with a strong force and all the Panciatichi from Pistoia to spread tumult and devastation over the country of the Cancellieri so that the armed strength of this faction at Monte Murlo should hasten away in self-defence, and so diminish the hostile garrison. Orders were at the same time issued to stop all communication with that place, and thus everything being ready the movement of troops commenced.

On a dark and rainy night, the thirty-first of July 1537, seven hundred select Italian infantry and a hundred cavalry issued from the citadel of Florence under the command of Alessandro Vitelli, Pirro Colonna, Otto da Montauto, and Ridolfo Baglioni who commanded the cavalry ; all well disciplined and well appointed men ; and at the same moment Francesco Sarmiento's Spanish and German brigade made a movement in the direction of Florence as if to take up their

quarters there, but suddenly turning to their right met Vitelli under the walls of Prato. After a short halt a detachment of light horse, led by the captain Pozzo from that garrison, and sixty arquebusiers, advanced towards the enemy's position with which they were well acquainted. Piero Strozzi had brought his men up almost to the walls of Prato, where some skirmishing took place in the morning, and then retired to his quarters leaving Sandrino da Filicaia with a detachment in ambuscade two miles from that town expecting a renewal of the skirmish at his own door the following day. Vitelli's advanced guard was closely followed by Baglioni's horsemen with another detachment of infantry; then came the main body of Italians in close order followed at some distance by Sarmiento's brigade of fifteen hundred Spanish and some German foot as a reserve in case of unforeseen misfortune. The whole division resumed its march an hour before day-light and soon discovering Sandrino drove him skirmishing on Piero's column which sleepy and surprised were hastily led on by him to repel what was imagined to be the Prato cavalry: he was soon unhorsed and made prisoner though unknown, but escaped from his captor and taking to the hills arrived safely at Montale. Meanwhile Baglione's light cavalry pushed forward and cut off the enemy's retreat to Monte Murlo so that the whole column was annihilated, including the loss of a few small pieces of artillery which they had got at Bologna. Amerigo Antinori whose good horse saved him, found Filippo Strozzi already mounted for flight; his first words were about Piero, and finding that he was either dead or captured he lost all utterance, uncertain whether to fight or fly, and it was observed that no stroke of adversity had ever before overcome him. While Filippo remained thus amazed the enemy came up and rushing over the crumbling walls were for some time obstinately opposed in the market-place fronting the palace, but the defenders overpowered by numbers took shelter within, where seconded by those in

the church and belfry tower under Caccia Altoviti and Giovanni degli Adimari, they made a long and spirited resistance.

Meanwhile Federigo da Montauto had bravely fulfilled his orders and drawn all the Cancellieri from Monte Murlo by his noisy and troublesome inroad : after frequent skirmishes both factions concentrated at Badia-à-Pacciano and fought a close and obstinate battle of more than an hour's duration in which the Cancellieri were routed and driven for shelter on Montale. The news of this set Vitelli at liberty and the palace was gallantly assaulted, but equally vigorous was Caccia Altoviti's defence until the shot of an arquebuse brought him to the ground, and there was none to fill his place : nevertheless the fighting did not slack, and many a man and many of Vitelli's best and bravest officers fell under Adimari's fire from the belfry. Somewhat checked by this resistance and fearing the Mirandola division's arrival from Le Fabbriche only a few miles off, he paused after more than two hours hard fighting with considerable loss and assembling his officers would have ordered a retreat had not Giovambatista Borghese remonstrated, declaring there were signs of wavering within which promised an easy conquest to determined men : Colonna too was equally decided, and none could brook the idea of relinquishing such prizes as Strozzi and Valori, besides the many other gentlemen of distinction who accompanied them. The assault was therefore renewed ; a spirited rush on the gate of the palace stables under the principal entrance made the first impression ; the ground floor was vaulted but received light and air by grated windows looking into the court : through these the assailants broke and filled that space, gaining a small postern fronting the church whence Adimari after a hard fight had at length been driven. Fire too was used at the great entrance to repel the assailants for the doors had been torn away, but while still burning Otto da Montauto armed cap-a-pie with his shield thrown across his face dashed bravely through it followed by many a gallant spirit like

himself and carried everything on that side. The court and lower chambers were now in tumult, and shouts and cries and the clash of arms and the fall of swords rang through each vaulted passage; the great staircase was fiercely contested, the whole palace teemed with stifling smoke, all hope had vanished, and even flames were breaking forth or threatening. Strozzi and Valori had retreated to the higher chambers where fearing a general conflagration and seeing that resistance would be vain they were finally compelled to yield. They had both been intimate friends of Vitelli and trusted to his treatment: a certain Bombagliano d'Arezzo first laid hands on them but they refused him their swords and gave them to Vitelli. The prisoners were many and of great rank; amongst them the two sons of Baccio; Filippo di Niccolo Valori; Niccolo di Francesco Valori; Antonfrancesco degli Albizzi who had only that evening joined them; Braccio Guicciardini; Andrea Rinieri and Amerigo Antinori, besides many others of equal rank, were led away captives to Florence. The Mirandola division, though but four miles off and three thousand strong, on hearing of this disaster retreated in haste across the Apennines and thus ended this rash prelude to a good enterprise. Cosimo was saved and Vitelli triumphed; but Florentine liberty disappeared for ever*!

Florence was no more; her race was run, and she calmly resigned herself to the leaden weight of absolute government! Instead of being the queen of Italian republics blazing in all the fire, the splendour, the turbulence of liberty, for her citizens at least were free, she now remained like a ruined heap the lonely seat of despotism!

The prisoners, after an hour's delay at Prato, were conducted on the first of August to Florence, proceeding from the citadel

* Luigi Guicciardini, *Comment.*, Lib. —Varchi, Lib. xvi., pp. 376-379.—
i^o, p. 26.—Hist. di M. Marco Guazzo, Segni, Lib. viii^o, pp. 175-179.—Nardi,
p. 240.—Paulo Giovio, Lib. xxxviii., Lib. x^o, pp. 339-344.—Adriani, Lib.
p. 520.—Nerli, Lib. xii., p. 299.— i^o, pp. 54-62.—Cini, Lib. ii^o, pp.
Ammirato, Lib. xxxii., pp. 449-52. 68-80.

by the gate of San Gallo and Via Larga to the Medician palace and a dense crowd of anxious and curious spectators assembled to behold this striking example of fortune's usual fickleness!

Here was Bartolommeo Valori the great minister of Pope Clement the Seventh, the conductor of his armies, the governor of provinces, and once the absolute ruler of Florence and all her territory to be seen astride on a miserable pony, clothed in dirty rags, bareheaded, and exposed to the taunts of the multitude; for his part in the woes of Florence was fresh in the memory of every citizen! Next appeared the still young, the handsome, the rich, the gay and luxurious Filippo Strozzi, on a similar jade, in a soiled doublet, and miserable like his companion! He who was called the "*Crassus of Italy*," and at that very moment possessed far more than half a million of our present money! The first citizen of Florence, the kinsman and companion of princes; the loved, the flattered, the courted of all, the pride and admiration of his countrymen! Now the sport of fortune, led as a public spectacle through the same city in which he once revelled with princely splendour, and where his gorgeous palaces still proudly towering above the surrounding fabrics, frowned as in mockery on their fallen master!

Nor did the fate of Albizzi appear less hard: he too was of the noblest blood of Florence, of a race that ruled her in her brightest days; proud in his nature, he had filled high seats and led his country's armies: yet there was he seen, dragged on foot to the victor's palace and exposed to the scorn of ungenerous minds because repenting of more youthful errors in support of a tyrant race, he endeavoured with adverse fortune to emancipate his country. Here also were the sons of Baccio Valori, two young, virtuous, and spirited citizens; the one excellent in all the gentle accomplishments of the day, in arms and literature; the other famed for his overflowing benevolence and acquirements. Their only crime was too perfect and fatal

an obedience to a father's will. Thus marshalled, at the head of a long and melancholy train, subject to the brutal scoffing and insolence of the populace, these unhappy men were led into the presence of Cosimo who with his mother, like another Nero and Agrippina, secretly exulted over their misfortunes! In passing up the stairs and through the ante-chambers, they had already borne the taunts and ribaldry of the parasites that infested them men who would have licked the dust from their feet in prosperity, and thus were they ushered into the presence-chamber. Cosimo, young as he was, could conceal his transports under a calm grave and placid countenance, and in temperate language exhort them to bear their misfortunes philosophically: to their excuses and protestations of future obedience and their appeals to his clemency he replied equivocally but with apparent mercy, leaving them between hope and uncertainty at the very moment when the axe was already on the wheel. Strozzi and Valori being Vitelli's prisoners were confined to the citadel; some others of most distinction went to the Bargello; the rest remained in the custody of their captors who had a military right to their ransom. The "Otto di Balìa" were instructed to purchase these of the soldiers: from this the Spaniards to their honour turned with indignation, but the Italians who held those of greatest consequence, most inhumanly complied! Then began the work of death preceded as usual by unmitigated torture, and Cosimo de' Medici a boy of eighteen directed all with the calmness of an old executioner and the satisfaction of an experienced butcher. Four heads were taken off daily for four days successively in front of the public palace and this would have continued had not the people, cowed even as they were, become indignant and cried aloud against such murders. Valori who had wasted his substance and could pay no adequate ransom was shamelessly sold to Cosimo; but Filippo Strozzi was gold itself, and treated accordingly by the base and unprincipled Vitelli. A Spanish

soldier whose prisoner, the gallant Giovanni degli Adimari, had fallen into the hands of the "Eight," instantly sought him out and insisted with so much spirit and pertinacity on his liberation that he succeeded and immediately set him free, an example followed by most of his generous countrymen from the moment they discovered the bloody intentions of Cosimo. Not so the Italians: they in imitation of their perfidious commander sacrificed their unhappy countrymen without remorse on the altars of the tyrant the torturer and the headsman. Albizzi, Baccio Valori, and one son were executed on the twentieth of August in the court of the Bargello; the other was respited, to be first imprisoned, then banished, and ultimately recalled to his country, where he even married into the family of his father's executioner. Two more victims accompanied the above, on which occasion Alessandro Malegonelle, one of their judges, after enjoying the previous torture inflicted on them, exclaimed with delight "*We have this day wrung the heads off four thrushes and a blackbird,*" by the last epithet alluding to Alessandro Rondinelli who from Baccio's papers was found guilty of the Borgo conspiracy, and also inferior to the others both in rank and talents. Many more of inferior degree were hanged and the prisons were full, for there was not a Florentine student in Padua or Bologna that did not join the exiles: the cord and the pincers were in continual activity, and even when public indignation finally arrested murder, the prisons of Leghorn, Pisa, Volterra and other places were choked with captives. In this way the greater number of these wretched victims amongst whom was a son of Macchiavelli, finished their unhappy life in sorrow sickness and suffering while their tyrant rode heartless and triumphant through the streets of Florence. On the scaffold Albizzi acknowledged his youthful error in assisting to expel Soderini and received the headsman's stroke as a judgment; but none except Filippo di Niccolo Valori seem to have maintained a dignified behaviour in Cosimo's presence: he alone calmly advised the victor to

consult his own dignity, for their fault was of such a nature that mercy not rigid justice should prevail, wherefore he appealed to his clemency. But few regretted Baccio Valori, his offences against Florence and freedom were recent, great, and manifold, and though not himself so bloody as others his death was hailed as a signal judgment of Heaven, marking the very day seven years on which he had violated his own capitulation by assembling a parliament to reinstate the Medici*.

Filippo Strozzi was treated well by Vitelli: he had full liberty within the citadel and frequent communication with his friends; at this Cosimo was mortified but demanded the prisoner in vain, for Vitelli, his wife, and children were continually receiving valuable presents from their illustrious captive, and were in no haste to kill the fowl which laid the golden eggs. Filippo now felt too keenly the truth of old Salviati's warning when he not only advised the constructing this fortress but offered to advance the money for it. Married to a Medici of the highest rank he was always attached in heart to their cause, and only abandoned their party, not their principles, when he discovered that a rich popular and independent subject could never be tolerated by a jealous and absolute prince. He was known to all Europe for his taste riches and accomplishments, for attractive manners wit and liberality: the pope pleaded for him; Catharine of Medicis pleaded for him; the Marquis del Vasto in various ways attempted to save him; even Cosimo's ambassador Giovanni Bandini, grateful for

* Nardi, Lib. x., p. 345.—Ammirato, Lib. xxxii^o, p. 452.—Segni, Lib. ix., pp. 185-189.—Adriani, Lib. ii^o, pp. 64-67.—Cini, Lib. ii^o, pp. 80-86.—We here take leave of Nerli, and as far as relates to Florence, of Varchi. The former finishes with the triumph of his odious party, and talks of Cosimo's *clemency*! The latter, though too minute, is full of honest feeling and high moral sentiment: he does not

relate the catastrophe of Monte Murlo, and probably cut short his work because he could not justify his patron's cruelty and would not hide the truth. His inclination seems rather to the scandalous; at least he has no charity for crime. Nerli was a clear writer, and probably, like Guicciardini, a fair one as to facts; but a weak soft man, and a fawning courtier.

former favours tried hard to preserve his life ; Cardinals interceded for him ; many of Charles's ministers tried to protect him, but Granville was inexorable though Charles himself promised Paul his pardon if innocent of Alexander's death ; yet believing the contrary and incensed against Filippo he gave Cosimo simultaneous expectations of revenge.

To ascertain this the emperor consented to Filippo's being tortured ; Vitelli was removed at Cosimo's request after a base and treacherous sale of his prisoner, Giovanni della Luna succeeding him, and Bastiano Bindi chancellor of the "Eight," was ordered to examine the prisoner who not being able to bear pain was carried away senseless without any confession. His intimate friend Giuliano Gondi had been arrested ; after remaining a long time with him in the citadel he had gone on a mission to supplicate Andrea Doria's good offices with Charles in favour of Strozzi, but the reason of his imprisonment, though long and painful, was never clearly known, for he ever after kept a mysterious silence on the subject. A general impression obtained that on application of the torture some process was fabricated from his forced confessions against Filippo which induced Charles to give the latter up to the vengeance of Cosimo. This intelligence determined Filippo's conduct : after some management he one day succeeded in excluding the sentinel from his chamber and getting possession of his sword which it is said he fell upon, and died like an ancient Roman. Several papers were found on his table one of which accused the cardinal Cibo of his death ; on another was written, "*If I have not hitherto known how to live I shall know how to die.*" And praying for pardon, he added in a third, "*If I cannot be pardoned yet let my soul be placed along with that of Cato.*" On a fourth he wrote the dying words of Dido, "*From my blood an avenger will arise to others.*" Strozzi's death occurred in 1538 after about a year's incarceration ; yet

his body was never seen nor was its sepulchre ever known but his son Piero's whole life answered well to the "*Exoriare aliquis nostris ex ossibus ultor*" of his expiring parent*! Piero Strozzi declared afterwards at Naples that he was first a Florentine, secondly a Frenchman, and that "he would seek " his country's liberty successively from Heaven, the world, " and the devil, with eternal obligations to whichever granted " his prayer."

According to Segni that account of Strozzi's death which obtained most credit amongst the reflecting and judicious was, that either Don Juan de Luna or the Marquis del Vasto† (both of whom had promised never to deliver him into Cosimo's power) on hearing of the emperor's decision and seeing no other way of keeping their word, had ordered it! This was a strange boon but it probably saved him from more torture and a public execution. There is a writing given by Nardi, received he says from the sons of Filippo Strozzi, which though not autographic, states his reasons for committing suicide, and was sent as then believed, by Don Juan de Luna to Filippo's daughter the wife of Lorenzo Ridolfi; but this whole tragedy is enveloped in utter darkness and many written accounts of it were circulated in various forms yet all agreeing in substance. The following coming as it did from his sons, though equally doubtful with the rest, seems to comprise all that was either truly or falsely attributed to him.

" In order not to fall into the hands of my enemies by whom " besides being unjustly and cruelly treated I may be forced " through the violence of torture to say some things prejudicial " to my honour and that of innocent men, as already has befallen

* In the MS. the line is said to have run thus, "*Exoriatur ex ossibus meis sanguinis mei ultor.*" (Vide *Nardi*, Lib. x., p. 367.) But Cini (*Vita di Cosimo*, Lib. ii., p. 100) gives it as in the text.

† The Italian way of spelling this

nobleman's name, "*Guasto*" and "*Vasto*," has been hitherto followed, but Mariana calls him "*Alonso Davalos Marques de el Gasto, y tambien de Pescara por muerte de su primo Don Fernando.*" (*Somario della Historia de España*, Anno 1530.)

“ Giuliano Gondi ; I Filippo Strozzi have considered the mode
“ of terminating my existence. I commend my soul to God,
“ humbly beseeching him if he bestow no other good that he
“ will place it along with that of Cato of Utica and others who
“ like him have finished their lives as I do. I beseech the
“ Seignor Don Juan to have some of my blood made into a
“ pudding and send it to the most reverend (Cardinal) Cibo in
“ order that after my death he may satiate himself with what
“ during my life he could not, because that was the only thing
“ wanting for his acquisition of the pontificate to which he
“ aspired. And I pray him to allow my body to be buried in
“ Santa Maria Novella by the side of my wife if indeed he will
“ allow me to be buried in consecrated ground : if not, I shall
“ remain wherever they place me. I beseech my sons to
“ observe the testament I have already made in this castle
“ (which is written by Benvenuto Olivieri) all except the part
“ relating to Bandini. I further entreat my sons to pay the
“ Seignor Don Juan for the many benefits and expenses bestowed and incurred by him ; as being so much straitened I
“ never have been able to repay him anything. I pray also
“ that his majesty may become better informed of the affairs of
“ this republic and look to its welfare.—PHILIPPUS STROCCIUS,
“ jamjam moriturus.”

“ Exoriat ex ossibus meis Sanguinis mei ultor” *.

There was also a belief that Giuliano Gondi, after torture, was confronted with Filippo but instantly fell on his knees and asked the latter's pardon for what in the agony of suffering he had falsely accused him. The cause of Cibo's hatred, which was implacable, is little known ; and why Giovanni Bandini was excepted from his will is equally mysterious, as he seems to have been exerting himself in Filippo's favour at the imperial court even to his own detriment.

* It was said also that these documents were written by Pier Francesco da Prato, the tutor of Cosimo.

The course of history has been somewhat anticipated in the above narrative of one who was a remarkable instance of the nothingness of rank, beauty, talent, manners, accomplishments, boundless wealth; all in short that could be wished for here; in the absence of high moral sentiment and real religious feeling. Filippo Strozzi seems to have been cast in far too high an intellectual mould not to have spurned as it deserved the priestcraft of his day; but there is a wide gap between a reasonable use and the abuse of excellence; and he was not lofty enough to appreciate the beauties of genuine Christian morality. His good qualities seem all to have sprung from natural taste and impulse, not from principle; his evil ones from uncontrolled indulgence: yet some allowance must be made for a man who in such an age had half a million of gold at his command, perhaps the most pernicious gift that ever issued from Pandemonium! So rare were his endowments it is said, that nothing came amiss to him; his mind and genius mastered everything to which he chose to apply them; he was not prodigal, but judiciously liberal, and knew well how to choose and how far to trust his friends; but was of an easy flexible character and often led away against his better judgment. This especially appeared in his vacillating conduct at Venice and Bologna; and when a friend remonstrated with him for embarking in such an enterprise at his age, he answered "*It is true; but times are changed and the goslings now lead the geese to water.*" Filippo had five sons: Giulio and Alessandro died at Venice before their father, and Vincenzio not long after: Lione and Pietro, of whom more will be heard, both died in the French service warring with undiminished hate against Cosimo de' Medici: he had one daughter, Maddalena, ultimately married to Flaminio Orsino da Stabbia*.

Lorenzino de' Medici did not join in those proceedings which

* Ammirato, Lib. xxxii., p. 456. — ii°, p. 100.—Segni, Lib. ix., pp. 212-Adriani, Lib. ii°, p. 100.—Cini, Lib. 214.—Nardi, Lib. x., pp. 365-369.

led to the catastrophe of Monte Murlo: 4000 golden florins were set on his head; and double that sum with extensive privileges and immunities besides a perpetual exemption from taxes if delivered alive into Cosimo's hands*. Thus pursued his life was everywhere unsafe; from Venice he fled to Turkey, thence into France where he secretly resided, but imprudently returning to Venice he was there assassinated by command of the all-penetrating and implacable Cosimo †.

While these things were passing at Florence Solyman incited by Francis assembled a fleet of two hundred and fifty sail and seventy palandras or horse-transports, and under the direction of Troilo Pignattelli disembarked ten thousand infantry and fifteen hundred cavalry in Italy, took Castro near Otranto and overran a great extent of country. Don Pedro de Toledo Viceroy of Naples, by land, and Doria by water, made good opposition, but the Venetian fleet remained inactive at Corfu heedless of Turk and Christian although both sought and expected its assistance. Francis during this time had crossed the Alps at the head of forty thousand foot and four thousand horse with which he compelled the Imperialists to retire, he then re-ënfenced all his garrisons, and as the world expected was soon to ravage Lombardy when suddenly Leonora Queen of France and Maria Queen of Hungary, sisters of Charles V. met his aunt Margaret at Ghent and concluded a truce of three months from the end of November. This saved Milan, perhaps all the imperial possessions in Italy; Francis retired, and Solyman naturally believing himself betrayed withdrew his troops from Castro but threatened Venice. Paul III. A.D. 1539. taking advantage of this opening for peace offered to meet both sovereigns at Nice as mediator where he not only succeeded in concluding a truce for nine years but to the infinite mortification of Cosimo gained the Duchess Margaret of Florence for his grandson Ottavio Farnese.

* Varchi, Lib. xv., p. 324.

† Paulo Giovio, Lib. xxxviii., p. 507.

This marriage was the price of Pope Paul's aid in a league with Venice against Solymán, for Cosimo was slighted because his vassalage was secure and the citadel of Florence in imperial hands; yet as a consolation he was made Duke of Florence with all Alexander's authority, a distinction which the world had long given to him. On this occasion he ordered the republican coinage to be restruck with his own image and device: Saint John, the Lily, and the republican florin now vanished and golden crowns of somewhat smaller value became the established currency*. Having overcome his enemies Cosimo's next object was to get rid of his friends: he could never forgive any of those ministers who for their own purposes had laid him under the burden of so vast an obligation as the Florentine sovereignty. There was scarcely a man however distantly connected with the ruling faction at Florence who did not expect from Cosimo's youth or old acquaintance either to rule or guide him; but all were deceived! The young duke was in fact an extraordinary and even unnatural character: hitherto devoted to a country life, to sylvan sports and pastimes, and considered rather dull than otherwise, he suddenly burst from his puerility and asserting the sovereign authority even over the wisest and ablest citizens, governed everything but the imperial officers; and with a barbarity more suited to the hoary tyrant than a beardless youth, deluged his country with the blood of her most illustrious citizens!

Cardinal Cibo and Vitelli were the first he intended to
 A.D. 1539. grapple with: the former who had charge of Alexander's children accused Cosimo of trying to poison Giulio the eldest by means of one Biagio a druggist, a man of infamous character and particularly skilful in that branch of pharmaceutic acquirements. Cosimo indignant at this accusation, besides other causes of hatred, complained loudly to Charles,

* Muratori, *Annali*, Anni 1537-1538. *Storia delle Monete de' Gran Duchi Segni*, Lib. ix., pp. 189-195.—Orsini, *di Toscana*.

and requested that Biagio might be rigorously examined by torture in presence of the imperial ministers! This was accordingly executed for two successive days (Cibo refusing as a clergyman to be present) before Juan de Luna, Guicciardini, Matteo Strozzi and other witnesses, without any disclosures; after which the cardinal was compelled to leave Florence and Cosimo resisted every entreaty even of the emperor himself to be reconciled with him*. Alessandro Vitelli by the terror of his soldiers had as we have seen frightened the Florentine senate into the resolution of electing Cosimo, and by subsequent acts had established his authority; but Cosimo felt that Alexander in command of the citadel was his master, and that he himself only existed by imperial sanction, not as an independent prince. He hated Vitelli for treacherously occupying that fortress; he hated him more for plundering his house under pretence of honour; he hated him for his power and insolence in the city; and he hated him for the obligation of his support. After long and vainly endeavouring to destroy this man's favour at court Cosimo in 1537 succeeded in procuring his dismissal and Don Lopez Hurtado de Mendoza immediately succeeded him, but Juan de Luna finally became governor of the citadel†.

The four counsellors who for self-interest elected Cosimo, when they were no longer necessary found themselves completely neglected: the victory of Monte Murlo had steadied everything and the duke became despotic, leaving them only the contempt and hatred of their fellow-citizens. It may be charitably supposed that in their retirement a newly awakened conscience told them how infamously they had acted, and that remorse combined with disappointment shortened their days, for Francesco Vettori never left his house alive after the murder of Filippo Strozzi who was his intimate friend, as friendship then stood in Florence: Guicciardini retired to his villa oppressed with grief

* Cini, *Vita di Cosimo*, Lib. ii°, pp. 105-7. — Adriani, Lib. ii., pp. 110-111. — Ammirato, Lib. xxxii., p. 453.

† Segni, Lib. ix., p. 196. — Adriani, Lib. ii., p. 76. — Ammirato, Lib. xxxii., p. 455.

and mortification and died there in 1540 with strong suspicions of poison. Ruberto Acciaiuoli and Matteo Strozzi soon followed: Francesco Campana, who had been active in all the late transactions especially Cosimo's election, and finally became his secretary, died soon after: lastly, his ambitious mother Maria de' Salviati finished her existence in 1543. Thus was Cosimo de' Medici quickly relieved of the burden of gratitude; but that of imperial control was a long and grievous load which threw him under the feet of Charles as one of his humblest vassals; and his marriage with Leonora of Toledo, daughter of Pedro Marquis of Villafranca, though it increased his influence at the Spanish court did not lessen this dependence*. Waiting therefore for a more favourable occasion to shake off his trammels this extraordinary youth at once applied himself to domestic reform: the scrutiny, the finances, the punishment of partiality exercised in the imposition of taxes, the construction of a new citadel at Arezzo, and the strengthening of Prato and Pistoia occupied his immediate attention. He then turned his mind to the restoration of health in the Pisan territory by the reconstruction of ancient drains and canals which had been shamefully if not purposely neglected by the republic. A scarcity of food gave him great anxiety for Florence, and another outbreak of the Pistoian factions called for his interference, after quelling a mutiny of the Spanish troops accompanied by terrible disorders.

Giovanni Tonti of the Cancellieri assembled his faction and made an attempt to scale the unguarded walls of Pistoia, intending to put every man woman and child to the sword. Being the first to mount he caught hold of the battlement and in the very moment of declaring that "Even Heaven itself should not hinder his entry," some stones gave way and he fell headlong to the ground: such blasphemy was a fit prelude to premeditated murder, and his fall a striking

* Adriani, Lib. ii., p. 105.

comment on the man's audacity. His people believing they were discovered took to flight, but Cosimo punished them sharply, and then for ever put a stop to the butchery of these inveterate factions *. With Lucca he immediately endeavoured to quarrel in hopes of adding her to his dominion ; but Lucchese gold was too skilfully employed in the imperial court and this project failed. Siena, to which he also looked forward as a future province was a slower operation yet still glimmered in the distance : but of this conquest we shall see more in the following chapters when the Medici by imperial favour were firmly seated on the throne of a more extended territory than ever was governed by the republic, and yet with less weight in Italian or European politics.

The Florentine nation thenceforth ceases, Tuscany itself becomes inanimate ; and although Siena throws out some dying sparks, Cosimo becomes all in all. From this time the sovereign's personal character alone gives vigour and reputation to the state : Cosimo's did much, because he was a marvellous instance of a boy, after sudden exaltation from an obscure station to the dangerous heights of new and tottering sovereignty, at once spurning every puerile taste and strenuously embracing the labours of a difficult government, the anxiety of unfirmed dominion, a wily and unscrupulous ambition ; dissimulation, tyranny, and unmitigated revenge !

His great contrast was Peter Leopold of Austria who two centuries and a half later ascended the same throne at the same age, rejected like him every youthful pleasure and attended exclusively to government ; but who unlike him and though born in the purple, made ambition the handmaid to benevolence, and devoted a long and busy reign to the moral political and physical amelioration of a people who were not even his countrymen ! Times were changed it is true and the world had become more civilized ; but human nature is ever the same, and

* *Ammirato, Lib. xxxii., pp. 456 and 458.*

with equal vigour of mind in these two, and analogous pursuits, what a discrepancy of character and consequences ! By Cosimo and his descendants the nation's energy was killed or driven into reckless wickedness ; the Austrian endeavoured on the contrary to restore and exalt it, and the marks of his hand are everywhere seen in the present state of Tuscany.

COTEMPORARY MONARCHS.—No change since 1537.

CHAPTER III.

FROM A.D. 1540 TO A.D. 1555.

COSIMO I.

DUKE OF FLORENCE.

COSIMO's success, although with extraneous assistance, shows the advantage of concentrated authority, even on a weak foundation, over a combined force of independent leaders each sped by his own views towards his own A.D. 1540. objects and considering the general cause rather as a means of their accomplishment than as the common focus of exertion. This is also one of the leading reasons why popular attempts at liberty are rarely successful against established power unless under peculiar and very favourable circumstances : where unity, sincerity of purpose, and acknowledged financial powers are combined, as they were in the English Parliament against the Stuarts, a different result but after long struggles was exhibited. France too succeeded against her absolute princes by a gradual and almost imperceptible movement suddenly brought to a crisis ; " the torrent's smoothness ere it dash below ;" in which the downfall of monarchy however modified was the real exciting spirit, and the folly of opponents the principal means of success. North America's triumph sprang from a similar oneness of object aided and probably caused by the feeble counsels and distant resources of her oppressors : the Florentine exiles on the contrary lost everything from peculiar and selfish views, disunion, and extreme silliness of action. The same prudence and bold decisive character which overwhelmed Cosimo's anta-

gonists had now established him permanently on the throne of Florence; as yet an imperial vassal and subject to many mortifications; but still a sovereign prince and in the domestic government of his country absolute and independent. Angry at the obligation imposed on him of paying over a vast portion of the Medician property to the Duchess Margaret of Austria, and too proud as it would seem to inhabit a house no longer his own, Cosimo suddenly commanded that the public palace should be prepared for his reception; but this might also have been done to mark more distinctly that all authority was now concentrated in his person, and that the house of Medici and Florentine nation were to be considered as identical, for there had ever been a strong feeling in Florence that those who possessed the "Palazzo" were masters of the state: the first object of contending factions was its occupation, and the whole official power and dignity of the Seignory seemed mysteriously attached to the enchanted circle of the old republican residence*.

A.D. 1541. The year 1541 was ushered in by a comet, earthquakes, and a severe dearth through the whole land and in the midst of all the duchess gave birth to a child; he was christened Francesco in fulfilment of a vow made the year before in a journey to the "Holy Places" of Vallombrosa, Camaldoli, and La Vernia the sanctified residence of Saint Francis, to whose merits the blessing of a son and heir was devoutly attributed†.

Cosimo's ambition now pointed towards the acquisition of Siena, a state weakened by years of tyranny faction and anarchy under the name of freedom, and which with imperial favour he hoped ultimately to acquire‡. Although attached to the emperor, Siena did not escape better than others from the treaty of Cambray, yet Charles gave little attention to its internal government except as affecting his own interests;

* Cini, Lib. iiº, p. 110.

† Segni, Lib. ix., p. 218. — Adriani, Lib. iii., p. 128.

‡ Adriani, Lib. iii., p. 182. — Malavolti, Storia, Lib. viii., Parte iiiª, folios 140-1.

wherefore distributing all his favours amongst the nobles he repressed political ambition in the people and concentrated it almost exclusively in that proud and turbulent order. Alphonso Piccolomini Duke of Malfi through imperial influence had been frequently chosen "Captain of the People," and in 1538 preserved his command by means of a Spanish garrison and the assistance of Giulio Salvi who with six brothers profited by Malfi's incapacity and ruled the commonwealth. - Siena under this man was reduced to such a condition that the highways were no longer safe and the communications between Florence and Rome rendered so dangerous as to induce the Pope and Cosimo de' Medici to alter their direction*. The complaints of Siena against Malfi and his adherents were laid before Charles at Lucca where he lodged in September 1541 on his way to Genoa and Algiers, in order to meet Paul in conference about the general council which subsequently assembled at Trent and Bologna.

Cosimo strengthened these complaints by acquainting Charles with a secret treaty which he had discovered between Giulio Salvi and Mons. de Monluc then secretary of the French embassy at Rome; but the imperial ambassador Aghillara had already detected it: Monluc says nothing of this negotiation the object of which was to deliver Port Ercole to the French so as to secure them an entrance to Tuscany and the alliance of Siena in the coming war †. Francis I. had been secretly feeling his way by means of a young Bolognese exile called Lodovico dall'Armi who sounded Giulio de' Salvi and excited his fears by accounts of the emperor's evil intentions towards him and his family. Giulio partly acquiesced yet wanted surer credentials than Lodovico's word, and when by the imperial ambassador's letters to the Duke of Malfi warning was given against the

* Malavolti, Lib. viii., Parte iii^a, fol. 140.

† Platina, Vite, Paulo III., p. 534.— Sismondi, vol. xii., p. 126.— Sozzini,

Rivoluzioni di Siena, p. 22.— Malavolti, Lib. viii., Parte iii^a, fol. 141.— Adriani, Lib. iii., p. 134.

machinations of Lodovico, suspicion arose and the latter was imprisoned*. After some previous inquiry the emperor sent Granville in November 1541 to effect a thorough reformation of the Senese government: the result was a *Balia* of forty citizens eight of whom were named by Granville, the remainder by the various factions, and the presidency of the tribunals by an imperial subject called the "*Captain of Justice*" nominated by the Senate of Naples or Milan, or by the emperor himself. Several other changes were effected and the people finding themselves thus mocked with the name of liberty became discontented and would have revolted in 1542 had not the Spanish guard within, and strong bodies of Florentine troops at Staggia and Poggibonzi restrained them†. Having thus bridled Siena, but before Granville's mission was completed, Charles embarked at Spezia on his unlucky expedition to Algiers, after extracting 100,000 florins from Cosimo as the future restitution price of the fortresses of Florence and Leghorn: he also gave judgment in a lawsuit between Margaret of Austria and that prince about the payment of her dower for which the Medician estates were mortgaged, and being judge in his own cause decided that Cosimo on payment of 180,000 florins should be considered free of all further demands on the family possessions.

The historian Bernardo Segni, probably an eye-witness, describes this emperor at Lucca in his usual dress with a sort of Greek cap of black cloth; a simple "*saio*" or robe, without any ornament; an old worn felt hat, and boots; and in this plain attire he held courts of justice, received ambassadors, and transacted all the ordinary business of the state; representing in his own person the most powerful emperor since Charlemagne or even since the times of the ancients, and covering with this simple garb an ambition more grasping than them all. Meanwhile and notwithstanding the pope's endeavours

* Adriani, Lib. iii., p. 134.—Malavolti, Parte iii^a, Lib. viii., fol. 141.

† Adriani, Lib. iii., p. 185; Lib. iv., p. 208.

to preserve tranquillity Francis I. could not brook the loss of Milan, aggravated as it was by the recent murder of two French ambassadors on the Po in their way to Turkey, and supposed to be by order of the Marquis del Vasto*; wherefore encouraged by German troubles he declared war against Charles in July 1542, and commenced hostilities in Piedmont Perpignan and the northern frontier with various fortune.

Feeling the inconvenience of being surrounded with imperial troops and impatient at Pirro Colonna's insolence Cosimo established a German body-guard of two hundred men while he bent every faculty to self-preservation and the emperor's service with all that long-sighted sagacity and dissimulation so peculiarly his own: he was the slave of his personal ambition not of the emperor, but was patiently subservient for the sake of future benefits. In the meanwhile he occupied himself in building, in useful public works, in visiting every part of his dominions, minutely investigating everything, hearing petitions and complaints, punishing malversation, and rigidly performing the duties of a sovereign by acquiring a thorough knowledge of his people, yet utterly without mercy in the burdens he imposed. In his administration Cosimo was generally impartial, but slow in examination; he granted few audiences, and required almost all matters to be laid before him in writing to avoid importunity and give time for consideration. His domestic expenses were great for he lived sumptuously, even to extravagance, and gambled to please his wife who was immoderately fond of it. She lost great sums, had vast influence over him, participated in the government and became the channel of all favour; indeed Cosimo's devotion to Eleonora de Toledo was such that when Segni wrote in 1555, just sixteen years after their marriage, it was generally believed that he had never once been unfaithful †.

* Segni, Lib. ix., p. 240; Lib. x., p. Annali, Anno 1541.

245.—Robertson's Charles V., vol. † Segni, Lib. ix., p. 217, and Lib. iii., Lib. vii., pp. 235-6.—Muratori, x., p. 225.

With such management when Cosimo visited Charles V. at Genoa he was able to add two thousand Florentines to the Algerine expedition and afterwards a detachment to the German army without weakening his own dominions or the general defence of Tuscany, but not without excessive taxation A.D. 1542. and unpopularity ; and so well was he aware of this and so little impervious to flattery, that when Segni in an epistle addressed to him overstepped his own opinions as well as his veracity by praising Cosimo for his excellent government and the happiness of Tuscany, the latter returned his address with the following autograph note. " I would wish that all you have " written in my praise were true, but I know that one part is " not so in fact ; yet I am well inclined to make it so if God " give me grace to accomplish such an end." Cosimo's frankness merits admiration no less than Segni's ingenuous avowal of his own turpitude in thus attempting to flatter a prince who he himself says, though endowed with great virtues and rare qualities had in a great measure destroyed the honour and faculties of all Tuscany. These injuries it is true were to a certain degree necessary in his peculiar position for the actual preservation of his throne, but they were such things adds Segni, as "*to men seemed cruel and without regard to any considerations either human or divine*" *.

There had been constant enmity between Cosimo and the Marquis del Vasto since Filippo Strozzi's death, for he along with most of the other imperial ministers had affected a contemptuous demeanour towards him while they made all the use they could of his resources for the emperor's service. All this Cosimo bore for the sake of future exaltation ; but that alone could bow his haughty spirit to the yoke and make him seem the slave he was not. Imperial interests were nevertheless his own ; wherefore the failure at Algiers and Granville's persuasions induced these chiefs to stifle personal feelings and

* Segni, Lib. ix., p. 184.

unite for general safety. Stefano Colonna had quitted the French service in disgust at the hatred then borne to all Italians, and Cosimo made him his general with the title of Lieutenant in order more distinctly to mark his dependence, for the evils of a divided service between himself and a powerful emperor had been too sharply felt*. Troops were immediately quartered about Piombino whose position and the feeble character of its ruler, Cosimo's uncle by a marriage into the Salviati family, made it a desirable object for the intrigues of Francis I. and the attacks of his declared brother the sultan. Cosimo visited this uncle and was satisfied with his intentions, but both before and after the Prince of Piombino's death he never ceased soliciting Charles to occupy that post and give Appiano some principality less dangerous to the existing state of Italy; a measure already acquiesced in if not hastily proposed and then withdrawn by the Prince of Piombino himself. Charles refused to do this, either from its being an unnecessary piece of injustice or because he had no present mind to aggrandize the Duke to whom its defence would have fallen, and ultimately its possession, which was Cosimo's principal object†. After the completion of defensive measures Cosimo endeavoured to turn his subjects' attention from politics to literary pursuits and amongst other things restored the Pisan University, which had withered amidst the conflict of war and faction, and enabled it to maintain forty poor scholars in addition to the usual number. On this occasion or shortly before, Benedetto Varchi returned from exile and became one of the Duke's greatest favourites, at whose desire his history was written. Besides him, Francesco Verini, Antonio Lapinì and "Il

A.D. 1543.

* Cini, Lib. iiº, p. 126. — Adriani, Lib. iii., p. 163. — Ammirato, Lib. xxxii., p. 464.

† On 13th of June, in this year, began a series of earthquakes which lasted forty days, and did great mischief, especially in the Mugello, where twelve hundred houses were ruined

and one hundred and forty people killed in Scarperia alone. Florence suffered more fright than injury, but elsewhere the effects were lamentable. (Vide *Adriani*, Lib. iii., p. 167.) — Cini, Lib. ii., pp. 122-3. — Ammirato, Lib. xxxii., vol. iii., p. 464.

Brando" were then celebrated as philosophers; Matteo da Corto and Boldone as physicians; and "Il Vegio" as a professor of laws, all more or less connected with public studies and supported by the Duke *. On seeing the French monarch's formidable preparations against his Flemish and Italian states and that Francis had also excited Solyman to invade Hungary as well as the Mediterranean shores, Charles promptly determined to pass through Italy into Germany and show himself wherever necessary; wherefore after the marrying his son Philip to Maria Princess of Portugal he embarked with Andrea Doria and landed at Genoa in March. Cosimo instantly joined him and with Granville's aid against much political intrigue, finally accomplished his long-agitated purpose of regaining the two citadels, for which however Charles made him pay 150,000 crowns and resign Stefano Colonna to the imperial service in Flanders, besides allowing four thousand men to be raised in his dominions. All these he was too happy to grant, and instantly quitting the court at Pavia rode ninety miles in complete armour with incredible celerity until he reached Bagnone a town of his own dominions; such was his eagerness to confirm the bargain! Although the Florentines were already sinking under the weight of taxation, so oppressive and generally odious were both imperial garrisons that this additional burden was supported with something approaching to cheerfulness and assisted even by some absentees inimical to Cosimo. In the short space of fifteen days the money was collected and sent to Charles at Trent where by a judicious distribution of bribes amongst the imperial ministers from Granville downwards, all managed by Eleonora's brother Don Francisco de Toledo, the citadels were restored in despite of every opposition and Cosimo now could breathe as an independent prince †. The German garrison of Florence was soon augmented to two thou-

* Adriani, Lib. iii., p. 186.—Ammirato, Lib. xxxii., p. 466.

† Cini, Lib. ii°, p. 131.—Ammirato,

Lib. xxxii., p. 466.—Muratori, Anno 1543.—Adriani, Lib. iii., p. 192.

sand men, Piombino occupied by Florentine troops, Siena curbed by its Spanish garrison and Cosimo's frontier force, and the whole coast on the alert against a Turkish invasion. Barbarossa with a powerful armament had taken Nice and long threatened a descent on Tuscany: he soon menaced Piombino with fire and sword unless a certain child, the son of a Turkish officer by an Elba woman, were restored, in which case he promised to leave the place unmolested. Cosimo although well on his guard deemed it more discreet to avoid the attack even at the risk of the young Mussulman's soul, and delivered him up, to the great satisfaction of Barbarossa and all the squadron, by which he was welcomed with discharges of artillery and every sort of rejoicing. The Turkish admiral instantly despatched a vessel with him to his father then commanding a flotilla on the Red Sea, who after having for years considered him as lost was so overcome that he is said to have died of joy *. The Maremma of Siena was subsequently attacked and that city demanded aid of Cosimo who sent a force under Chiappino Vitelli, but he could neither save Talamone

A.D. 1544.

nor Port Ercole, and Orbitello would also have fallen had not Don Juan de Luna the imperial lieutenant at Siena advanced to its assistance with a band of young Senese volunteers and the Florentine auxiliaries. After this, and notwithstanding all the remonstrances of Leone de' Strozzi Prior of Capua who commanded a squadron of French galleys, Barbarossa quitted the coast and returned to Constantinople †.

It was strange to see a prior of the order of Saint John of Jerusalem fighting in the ranks of the infidels, but his master the most Christian king was their ally, and the Strozzi themselves sacrificed every other feeling to that of vengeance for their father's death. Piero at his own expense had levied a

* Cini, Lib. ii^o, p. 133. — Adriani, Lib. iv., p. 205. — Ammirato, Lib. xxxii, p. 467. — Malavolti, Parte iii^a, Lib. viii., fol. 143.
 † Malavolti, Parte iii^a, Lib. viii., fol. 143. — Adriani, Lib. iv., p. 261. — Cini, Lib. ii., p. 134.

small army in Lombardy where he for some time harassed the Marquis del Vasto until the latter defeated him at Stradella between Placentia and Tortona with the aid of two thousand Florentines. The Senese jealous of a liberty that they no longer possessed, boiling up with faction, and especially fearful of Cosimo's evident ambition to get possession of Piombino as a step to Siena, compelled him to withdraw his troops whom they would not suffer to enter a walled town; and soon after this the peace of Crespy put a period to European hostilities and once more gave a breathing-time to Italy. Don Juan de

A.D. 1545. Luna continued to command a small Spanish garri-

son at Siena but as the emperor seldom paid his soldiers they were compelled to subsist in time of peace on the resources of powerless allies to which they most unscrupulously helped themselves. The robbery insubordination and licentiousness of these troops were extreme and the public detestation of both them and their commander was increased by his partiality for the nobles and intimacy with Cosimo: wherefore exasperated by aristocratic insolence in addition to military oppression, the citizens expelled both Luna and his

A.D. 1546. myrmidons with about a hundred nobles, and on the fourth of March 1546 once more established their supremacy in the commonwealth*.

While Italy lay supine under the strong hand of transalpine power and even the very shadow of liberty seemed fading before her, an humble Lucchese citizen, a simple tradesman, prompted by feelings too lofty for his age and country, formed the generous plan of awakening old and glorious recollections, of invoking the national spirit to his aid, and reestablishing that ancient constellation of Italian republics which once had shone so brightly while restoring freedom arts and civilisation to a benighted world. Francesco Burlamacchi with a mind and

* Galluzz., Storia di Toscana, Lib. i., xxxiii., p. 474.—Malavolti, Parte iii^a, cap. v., p. 142.—Sozzini, Rivoluzioni Lib. viii., fol. 144-5.—Sismondi, vol. di Siena, p. 25.—Ammirato, Lib. xii., p. 129.

conceptions too free and generous for the time ; and more in unison with those Greek worthies whose actions excited kindred feelings and inflamed his imagination, fancied that the existing state of Tuscany resembled ancient Greece, and that with the assistance of a few men of spirit and sincerity he would be able to add another example of patriotism to those of Thrasibulus and Pelopidas. His intentions were first disclosed to Cæsare di Benedino a dyer by trade, but of a stout heart and great worldly experience, who although seeing the danger and difficulty yet promised his assistance. Burlamacchi's first object was to insure the coöperation of Piero and Leone Strozzi, because from their spirit, wealth, and credit in the court of France but more from their enmity to Cosimo, he regarded them with most expectation. By means of Cæsare Benedino and a certain Bastiano Carletti who had served under Leone Strozzi he communicated with the latter at Venice ; but probably considering the scheme somewhat romantic yet not wholly despicable, Leone showed himself at first indifferent to the proposal so that Burlamacchi determined to have a personal interview. Under the pretext of visiting his sister at Ferrara he passed quietly on to Venice where Carletti secretly introduced him to the prior and according to the subsequent testimony of the latter addressed him nearly as follows.

“ If in what I am come to propose to you, Sir Prior, you do
“ not perceive that there is more for your own benefit than for
“ mine and that my danger is at the very least as great if not
“ greater than yours I know not why you should listen to me
“ at all on such a subject : and if on the other hand I cannot
“ convince you (remembering that no great design can be
“ accomplished without some risk). If I cannot I say con-
“ vince you with what facility and glory, if God favour honour-
“ able enterprises, this may be effected, verily I should have
“ done better to remain in Lucca than come here to Venice,
“ because useless words would only subject me to ridicule.

“ The present state of Tuscany is even better known to you
“ than to me, and there is no doubt that Siena, in dread as she
“ is of the imperial anger for what has already passed, will
“ eagerly embrace any opportunity that fortune may place
“ within her reach. How impatiently Pisa even now suffers a
“ stranger’s rule and how vivid are still her recollections of
“ ancient liberty is proved by the glorious defence she made
“ for its sake even in our own and our fathers’ times, when
“ abandoned by all the world, thinned of men, drained of
“ money, exhausted of food, bereft of credit; yet by the
“ vigour and vivacity of her indomitable spirit alone, she main-
“ tained herself against the whole force of your armies. I
“ will not renew your afflictions by speaking of Florence,
“ knowing too well how much your house has suffered in her
“ cause; Perugia still smarts under her recent wounds; Arezzo
“ is indignant at the loss of her lately-recovered freedom;
“ Bologna bears the papal yoke with impatience, and Pescia
“ and Pistoia will follow the destiny of Florence. And now
“ may we not hope that amidst the mass of discontent reason-
“ ably believed to exist in those cities, if the smallest chance
“ of their deliverance appear each will show herself ready and
“ willing to take advantage of it? Will that burning thirst
“ for liberty be so extinguished in every heart that those
“ who sacrifice their life and property in her cause shall be re-
“ garded with detestation? But listen to the way by which I
“ hope to succeed in my attempt. You know that in Lucca
“ there are three commissaries appointed to command the
“ militia of our state; their authority is vast, and each has
“ about fourteen hundred men under him which I can increase
“ if I please to two thousand. Now my intention is to be elected
“ one of these commissaries which according to our customs
“ will not be difficult, and then as it will become my duty to
“ review the troops, I propose to lead them into the meadows of
“ the town and detain them there until after the gates are shut, so

“ that they shall be compelled to remain outside : then supply-
“ ing them with food, the arrangements for which are already
“ made, give them to understand that in consequence of a
“ muster of troops by the Duke of Florence it had become
“ necessary to cross the Monte San Giuliano. And there I
“ would open my mind to the several captains, who are all my
“ intimate friends and will not fail me, and then march towards
“ Pisa, which having but a small garrison who is to prevent
“ us from entering and calling the inhabitants to liberty?
“ Who is there that will not run to join our standard and unite
“ their destiny with ours ? I also design, after leaving two or
“ three hundred men blockading the citadel, to march along
“ with the Pisan malcontents on Florence where the Duke
“ being unprepared, the people as I believe discontented, and
“ the Spaniards far away, I should have well-founded hopes of
“ a joyful and fortunate issue. I know that such things appear
“ like chimeras to the timid mind, but to brave and enterprising
“ spirits nothing is difficult ; Valour opens the way to inacces-
“ sible places, and Glory stretching forth her hand beckons men
“ upward to the stars ! It was in this way that Thrasibulus with
“ a few adherents liberated Athens from the violence of those
“ that ruled her, and his example encouraged Pelopidas with
“ still fewer ; not more than forty-eight persons, a thing which
“ seems incredible ; to the design of emancipating Thebes, and
“ he did so * ! With what infantry, with what cavalry did
“ Aratus expel Nicocles from Sicyon †, and with how few
“ soldiers ? And if these exploits from their great antiquity
“ are not fit examples for us, and if it seem impossible to others
“ that a man who has the power and dominion in his hands
“ should in a moment be expelled from both ; I will answer,
“ that not many years have passed since Ugucione dalla
“ Fagiola was driven in one day both from Pisa and Lucca !

* Pelopidas had only eleven followers ; but Epaminondas and a good spirit
was within.

† He murdered him.

“ And we all know that Uguccione was a brave man, an able
“ captain, a prince of deep understanding and powerful intel-
“ lect ! But why do I seek for examples distant from our own
“ times, would not Giovanni Tonti have succeeded, I may say
“ but yesterday, in his attempt on Pistoia and in doing what
“ he pleased with that city if fortune alone, not want of judg-
“ ment or impossibility, had not failed him at the very instant
“ of complete success ? And how much easier will it be for
“ us with two thousand men to enter the places I have men-
“ tioned, and to do what ? To give liberty to some, to restore
“ others to their country, to unite all in love and charity,
“ governing ourselves under the form of a confederation as was
“ done of old before the days of the Romans ; as our own fore-
“ fathers did only a few centuries past ; and as in our own
“ times the Swiss are accustomed to do : the Swiss ! A people
“ that cannot for a moment be compared to ourselves in natural
“ genius, riches, excellence, or nobility of blood ! Let us act
“ then as becomes the brave ; let Tuscan valour spread abroad
“ its fame ; and as I am persuaded that the commencement
“ will succeed, so am I more sanguine of ultimate success if
“ you my lord prior and your brother Piero will only take a
“ part of the burden on your shoulders ; and this you should
“ do much more than I, because your interest in it is greater :
“ for you are exiles from your country, now the slave of
“ another, while I continue to enjoy myself in mine which still
“ flourishes free and independent : and so much the more to
“ you than to me does this enterprise belong as the resulting
“ glory will be greater ; because you are already known to the
“ world for nobility riches and for deeds of fame, while my
“ humble name is scarcely breathed beyond the walls of Lucca ;
“ and therefore did I say in the beginning of this discourse
“ that if my danger were not greater than yours it is surely at
“ least equal, while I remain far behind in the honour and
“ glory and the benefit of the enterprise.”

Leone Strozzi lauded the generous conception and self-devotion of Burlamacchi but as between 20,000 and 30,000 ducats were necessary as well as immediate operations before harvest, on account of the discontent from scarcity both in Pisa and Florence, the prior advised a delay until the following September in order to see how the emperor might succeed with the League of Smalcalde, to give time for Piero Strozzi's coming over on some other pretence from France, and to allow of his collecting so large a sum as Burlamacchi required. The latter counted much also on the progress of the reformed religion in Lucca which made many desirous of casting off the papal trammels; and he believed that this longing had spread to several of the Tuscan cities which he hoped to unite in a league that would liberate both mind and body and reëstablish a free, happy, and prosperous nation able to defend itself against any earthly despot. Burlamacchi after this conversation returned to Lucca where he soon became gonfalonier and being intimate with many Senese exiles resident in that state, occasionally opened his mind to them as opportunity offered, but in general terms, until he at length more plainly demanded of a certain Cavaliere Marcello Landucci what he thought of such a project. To the Senese exile it seemed absurd and he answered truly, that neither the existing state of the world nor that of public feeling and opinion in town or country were such as to promise any favourable issue to the enterprise, but that in the enthusiastic conceptions of the human mind which flies to wherever man beckons it, every difficulty is obliterated. Burlamacchi nothing disheartened by this rebuff entreated these exiles to ponder the subject, without however informing them of his interview at Venice, but they all looked upon it as ridiculous and he therefore employed himself in gaining adherents at Pisa, Pistoia, Barga and Pescia, besides other parts of the Florentine territory. He also made friends with one Vincenzio di Poggio a Lucchese rebel who commanded the citadel of Pisa;

spent much money in gaining adherents ; secretly collected soldiers, won their good-will by his gifts and conversation, and left no means idle that could directly or indirectly conduce to the success of his project. In every discourse and action, he is said to have exhibited the signs of a lofty generous mind far beyond his condition in the world, unmoved by any selfish motive, and rising high above the spirit and policy of this age. His time of office was nearly expended in these preparations and being impatient of further delay he resolved on sending Cesare Benedini to settle with Leone Strozzi about the period of action ; but Cesare although faithful himself had the imprudence to communicate the secret to a friend called Andrea Pezzini who happened to be angry with the gonfalonier for a judgment given against him, and instantly and avowedly set off for Florence to reveal the conspiracy to Cosimo. Cesare alarmed at his own indiscretion immediately acknowledged it to Burlamacchi who prepared everything for flight but recollecting that he had to a certain point inculpated the Senese gentlemen who might thus incur some risk, as the crime was capital, he sent for one of them, informed him of the discovery and showed a letter which he had written to the Seignory acquitting them of all participation in the conspiracy. His alarmed and astonished auditor instantly communicated with the secretary of state upon which Burlamacchi was examined : meanwhile Cosimo had despatched Agnolo Niccolini to Lucca with a demand for his delivery but the Seignory calmly declared that it was a matter entirely between the gonfalonier and government and therefore refused their prisoner. Cosimo then procured an order from the emperor to consign him to the Milanese authorities who after a rigorous application of torture without inculpating any body, put him to death for even daring to dream of liberty ; and thus perished a noble free and generous spirit * !

* Galluzzi, *Storia di Toscana*, Lib. i^o, Ammirato, Lib. xxxiii., p. 476. — cap. v., p. 151.—Malavolti, Lib. ix., Adriani, Lib. v., p. 349. — fol. 146. — Cini, Lib. iii^o, p. 143.—

The Senese who had been long sulky and insubordinate determined to receive no imperial governors or garrisons and prepared accordingly, being secretly encouraged by the pope to worry Cosimo while the expenses and difficulties of Charles in Germany prevented his attention to minor and more distant affairs. The Marquis del Vasto was dead and his place supplied by Don Ferrante Gonzaga to whom the charge of Siena devolved, and Don Francisco de Toledo arrived at Florence with the written promise of Charles to make over the principality of Piombino including Elba within nine months. For this the emperor whose treasury was nearly drained received a nominal loan of 200,000 crowns. The obstinacy of Siena in refusing obedience, fostered as it was by French promises and papal machinations, finally attracted attention ; and the German difficulties having been overcome Cosimo was ordered to reduce that city to obedience, a task both doubtful and expensive, and coupled with the uncertainty of any remuneration, notwithstanding all the emperor's promises, one which he was disinclined to undertake. At last in consequence of the remonstrances of Gonzaga he began his preparations on so large a scale as to awe the Senese and induce them to comply with the imperial wishes by receiving a Spanish garrison. This was a fortunate event, for a conspiracy of the Fieschi family at Genoa and the disturbed condition of Naples where the people nobly and successfully resisted the establishment of the Inquisition, were threatening the imperial quiet, and the vast expense of such a war would have been ruinous to Cosimo even if it did not draw a French army into the heart of Tuscany ; he however maintained that province in peace, and the prosperous state of German politics calmed down all turbulence. Don Diego Hurtado de Mendoza the imperial ambassador at Rome took charge of Siena, and the murder of Pierluigi Farnese at Placentia with the connivance if not at the instigation of Charles V. put the latter in possession of that city, to the pon-

tiff's extreme dismay and the joy of Italy at being delivered from such a monster of iniquity*. The death of Francis I. and the succession of Henry II. to the French throne made no difference in the foreign politics of that country. Both the Strozzi were sent to assist the Queen of Scots under whose banner they distinguished themselves and Piero brought off the youthful and beautiful Mary to the court of France. James V. lord of Piombino died, leaving a widow and infant prince, and the period of nine months when Cosimo was promised possession of that principality had expired. As Charles could not decently avoid fulfilling his written promise, persuasion first and then menaces were made use of to perpetrate one of the most tyrannical acts of the age for the aggrandisement of Cosimo de' Medici, to whom permission was given for building a fortress

* An anecdote of him related by Varchi, who vouches for its truth, is sufficient to stamp the character of Pierluigi, of Pope Paul III., and of the age and country where such acts could be tolerated and even excused. It is too disgusting to be circumstantially laid before English readers even in a foreign language, wherefore we omit it; yet such things become matter for history when they are either general or the acts of great men and princes, and *as such palliated*. "In the year 1538," says Varchi, "a transaction occurred, than which I do not remember ever having heard or read either amongst ancients or moderns, amongst the truths of history, or amidst the fables of poetry, one more execrable, or worthy of greater, not blame but punishment. It was so horrible that I for myself not only blush with shame but shudder even to think of, much more to repeat it. Nor do I know with what decency or rather indecency of words I can or ought to cover or discover the baseness and wickedness of so impious, detestable, and perhaps;

never before heard of, rape and sacrilege, which I will narrate, although with the utmost disgust and indignation of mind, principally to prove two things. First, that this wretched and unhappy age of ours has also had its Tantalus and Thyestes: the second, that the death of this sinner, although most cruel and ignominious, was yet better than his merits, or more properly his demerits, deserved. And it moreover shows that even in this life wicked men sometimes suffer the penalty of their crimes." This horrible injury was perpetrated on Cosimo Gheri da Pis- toia, the young, handsome, and virtuous Bishop of Fano, who expired within forty days after; and Pier Luigi's father, Pope Paul III., treated it as what he called "*youthful volatility*," "*leggerezza giovanile*." With this anecdote Varchi suddenly terminates his minute and honest history, probably because he was coming too close on the heels of Cosimo, whose conduct, although his patron, he never could have approved or justified.

at Porta Ferraio previous to the occupation of Piombino, and so eager was he that it rose to a defensive state in the short space of seventeen days ! Cosimo's joy at this acquisition was quickly damped by hearing that Jacopo d'Appiano the young prince of Piombino had thrown himself at Charles's feet and implored him to restore his dominions : he was backed up by Cosimo's enemies and the imperial confessor, who very honestly made it a case of conscience ; so that the haughty Florentine was compelled to bow before his master and patiently submit to his decrees ; for he wisely reasoned that patience although failing to improve the coming fortune, at least inflicted no injury to the present : nor did he for this relax his obsequiousness, but sent his son to reverence Prince Philip on his arrival at Genoa. A more formal embassy was despatched to the French monarch at Turin ; and a conspiracy against Gonzaga's life in revenge for Pierluigi's murder, discovered by means of Cosimo's spies at Milan secured that minister's goodwill so that usefulness and patience towards all, combined with long-sighted views, clear and determined objects, indefatigable perseverance and immeasurable ambition and deceit, Cosimo was progressing steadily towards his ends in despite of every jealous opposition *. Quiet was reëstablished in Germany, but Italy was a hot-bed of intrigue, plots, and machinations. The imperial treasury was exhausted and Charles dreaded a new war ; his health had become enfeebled, and his ambition was ebbing along with it ; he wished to calm religious discord and therefore desired a general council ; but he wished it at Trent where the German prelates were assembled, while Paul, who like all pontiffs hated the very sound, declared for Bologna the better to manage Charles as well on the subject of religion as the restoration of Placentia, and this led to innumerable negotiations, intrigues, remonstrances, protests, and all the supple weapons of diplomacy. Similar deceit and agitation pervaded

* Ammirato, Lib. xxxiii., pp. 483-5.

the lesser Italian states in the shape of plots and secret machinations, aided and even promoted by the two principal actors to worry each other unnecessarily and impede their personal objects. Henry II. of France was too much occupied by England to molest Charles openly and therefore contented himself with seconding the pope; while Italy was pregnant with turbulence discontent and secret conspiracy. Mirandola, always attached to France, was a focus of disaffection and the rendezvous of every Italian rebel and exile: there the "*Fuorusciti*" of Genoa, Florence, Naples, Siena and Milan held their conclaves whether against the lives of princes or ministers, to surprise towns or foment rebellions; from that forge issued bolts which struck at the lives of Cosimo, Doria, and Gonzaga; caused an intended surprise of Piombino, and that formidable conspiracy which rendered the name of *Fieschi* memorable in the annals of Genoa*. Piero Strozzi and Cardinal Farnese were the principal directors of these plotters who moreover proposed the surprise of Barga as a nucleus of rebellion for all Florentine Tuscany: a conspirator of Barga was taken and examined at Venice where there was always an assemblage of foreign ministers; Giulio Cibo who was connected with the malcontents had already been tried and executed at Milan; and Don Juan de Mendoza the imperial ambassador in concert with Granville and Gonzaga, plotted in their turn against the life of Piero Strozzi but communicating with Cosimo in order to deal a surer blow. The duke's spies and emissaries were everywhere, and he was at that very moment watching with feline sharpness the motions of Lorenzino de' Medici who had recently returned from France: his secretary Giovanfrancesco Lottini da Volterra, a bold unscrupulous man, was easily engaged to carry Cosimo's wishes into effect: ostensibly on a mission of trifling import he arrived at Venice and like a bird of ill-omen scared all the exiles by his mere presence; for he was well known, but not

* Galluzzi, Storia di Toscana, vol. ii°, Lib. ii°, cap. ii., p. 20.

for good. When Lorenzino heard of his arrival and nominal commission he became alarmed; exclaiming "*God grant that it may be for nothing else.*" Lottini laid plots against Strozzi's life without success, but on the twenty-sixth of February Lorenzino de' Medici and Alessandro Soderini fell under his bravos' daggers; after which the latter taking refuge with the imperial ambassador were personally escorted by him from Venice and placed in safety on the continent, yet the Venetian government not only took no notice of these murders but their general sent Lottini a body guard for his protection! Such were the deeds of this age and country, undertaken without scruple and executed without blame *! The death of Pope Paul III. in November 1549 was the only event of striking conse-

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quence this year, but a number of secondary incidents were filling Italy with suspicion and paving the way to more serious results.

Amongst these the weak and tyrannical government of Don Diego de Mendoza at Siena was exasperating a disaffected population by augmenting the garrison, disarming the citizens, and forcibly moulding their constitution to his will. Supreme power was placed in the hands of a Balìa one half of which he nominated, while the old Senate a body also at his disposal, appointed the other: this left the republic prostrate, and so helpless that Charles had no hesitation in offering it to Paul III. in exchange for Parma and Placentia. But to secure this position he ordered a citadel to be built say-

A.D. 1550.

ing that he must act the part of a doctor as Siena was like a sick person ever asking for what was more injurious than salutary. Nor could the prayers and remonstrances of a whole people worn out with oppression and writhing under military insolence and licentiousness turn him from his course: they finally sent an embassy led by Orlando Malavolti the historian, but could only extract the above sarcasm from that cruel and imperturbable

* Galluzzi, Storia del Gran Ducato di Toscana, Lib. i., cap. vi.

Spaniard *. Siena had with a few intervals of Guelphic rule continued longer and steadier than almost any other city except Pisa, in her attachment to Ghibeline principles as opposed to the Guelphic or French and Papal party. Almost every faction successively in power followed the same line of foreign politics until the tyranny of Mendoza and Spanish rapacity overcame these connexions, broke every ancient tie, and reluctantly forced her into the arms of France.

Paul III. was supposed to have died of anger and mortification at the death of his son and the loss of Piacenza, and after a long vacancy the papal throne was filled by Cardinal de Monte under the name of Julius III. to the great satisfaction of Cosimo whose subject he was, though formerly united with the exiles and opposed to a monarchical government in Florence. Nor was the latter displeased at an opportunity of sending three well-equipped galleys to join the imperial squadron against the celebrated corsair Dragut as a specimen of his incipient navy which subsequently distinguished itself under the Knights of San Stefano: to accomplish this he had constructed an arsenal at Pisa, established naval regulations, and was applying all the wonderful energy of his mind to the formation of a national marine†.

The determined hostility of Henry II, the efforts of Ottaviano Farnese to maintain himself in Parma and
A.D. 1551. recover Placentia from the emperor, and the desperation of Siena had brought public affairs in Italy up to the boiling point and everybody feared an outburst. Ottaviano first applied the match; he had vainly implored justice from Charles and as vainly craved assistance from Julius III. who entirely abandoned him: the former, although his father-in-law, wished to rob him of Parma; the latter his liege lord would have bought imperial favour though it injured the church; and

* Malavolti, Parte iii*, Lib. ix., folio 150. —Preggi de' Toscani.— Platina, Vite
† S. Ammirato, Lib. xxxiii., p. 486. de' Papi.

both Gonzaga and Diego Mendoza were his private enemies : Ottaviano thus left helpless, for not a state in Italy dared to lift a finger in his cause, at once threw himself on France by a treaty with Henry II. which protected him against every enemy. This drew down the double indignation of pope and emperor ; a French garrison under Termes entered Parma, brought on a collision with Charles, and by the commencement of 1552, (the pope having withdrawn in alarm from the contest) war again rolled over the states of Europe*.

The Germans were soon in arms, and Charles's infirmities rendering him unequal to the whole weight of empire the Duke of Alva was appointed to command A.D. 1552. in Germany. On this officer's arrival at Genoa Cosimo despatched Bernardo de' Medici Bishop of Cassano to warn him of the condition of Siena and claim his influence with Charles for the restoration of Piombino ; and as he never ceased watching the Senese a correspondence with Monsieur de Lansac the French ambassador at Rome was soon detected and made known to the emperor ; but in return he had to endure the contumely and insolence of Mendoza and the hollowness of Charles, by whom he was treated like a vassal, not as an independent prince. All this was borne with the utmost obsequiousness and meekness because he had still occasion for imperial assistance, not only to bring forward his more distant objects of ambition but even to sustain himself in Florence against a people vexed and impoverished by an annually increasing taxation. He therefore not only remained faithful to Cæsar but offered assistance to this insolent Senese lieutenant which was contemptuously refused although the country exhibited every symptom of revolt.

Troops began to assemble in Castro and Pitigliano under Niccolo Orsini who had entered the French service ; Piccolomini and Amerighi two Senese exiles assembled three thousand

* Sozzini, Rivoluzioni di Siena, p. 48.—Muratori, Annali Anni 1551 and 1552.

insurgents and on the twenty-sixth of July the former from before the walls of Siena invoked the people in the name of France and Liberty. Roused at the long lost sound they started up as one man and all unarmed as they were opened the gates to their countrymen. The garrison was reduced to about four hundred Spaniards under Giovanni Franzesi d'Alaba, many having been distributed through the country; and Mendoza himself was at Rome. After much fighting especially in the market-place, and about the Dominican convent over Fonte Branda, the Spaniards gave way, evacuated that building and all their other positions and ensconced themselves in the citadel which was badly armed and provisioned. By Don Franzese's requisition at the first notice of this enterprise, Cosimo moved up a body of troops to his aid; but on a deputation of the citizens assuring him of their unshaken fidelity to Cæsar and imploring his neutrality he sent an agent to negotiate at Siena and report to him the state of things and his own prospects of success in case of interference. As these accounts were unfavourable and Cosimo wanted neither Spanish nor French supremacy in Siena, nor yet to draw the Gallic arms on himself while Charles was hard pressed by the Saxon in Germany, he signed a convention and even hoped to get hostages for that city's fidelity when Lansac's unexpected arrival put an end to the project*.

This however was no sudden enterprise but a well-organized movement concerted by the Cardinal Farnese, Count Nicholas Orsini of Pitigliano, and Louis de Lansac the French ambassador at Rome; wherefore by a capitulation with the latter in August 1552 the Spaniards were to evacuate Siena and the citadel was afterwards to be demolished: the latter was accomplished with great ceremony: the magistracies, "Captain of the People," the clergy, nobles and citizens their heads crowned with olive, and

* Cini, *Vita di Cosimo*, Lib. iii^o, pp. 171 to 179.—Sozzini, *Rivoluzⁱ. di Siena*, pp. 72 to 90.

entrenching tools in their hands, marched to solemn music under the great national banner, and after a formal delivery of the keys one loud unfettered shout rang through the air and "*Libertà*," "*Libertà*;" "*Francia*," "*Francia*;" "*Vittoria*," "*Vittoria*," reëchoed from the ramparts. Then began the work, and with such spirit that in one short hour more of the fortress on the side next to the city was pulled down than could have been rebuilt in four months*.

This capitulation was as ill received by Charles as it was joyfully by Henry who poured his legions into the heart of Italy and fomented the general hatred to Spain: the Duke of Termes reached Siena from France with troops, officers, and military stores, and made a treaty of alliance with that republic. Embassies passed between Cosimo and Siena by which the inviolability of Florence was guaranteed; still he could not contemplate without considerable uneasiness this settlement of a French power on his frontier, but as it was not a proper moment to expel the intruders he made a merit of necessity and consented to remain neutral. The Spanish officers from Siena had meanwhile arrived at court and laid all the blame of their own bad conduct on Cosimo, who was compelled to send an embassy for his own exculpation but succeeded in convincing Charles of his prudence and learned that monarch's determination to punish the revolvers with fire and sword†.

When the insurrection first occurred Cosimo was doubtful whether he would again offer that assistance already so contemptuously rejected by Mendoza; but urged by a portion of his council, by the pope, by the cardinals of Ferrara and Farnese, and lastly by a sense of personal dignity which suggested the necessity of showing himself an independent prince and not

* Sozzini, pp. 89-90.

† Galuzzi, *Storia di Toscana*, Lib. ii., cap. iº, pp. 273, 279, to 281.—Cini, *Vita*, Lib. iii., pp. 169-79.—Sozzini, *Rivol.*, p. 91.—Adriani, Lib. ix., p.

594.—Ammirato, Lib. xxxiii., p. 490, —Segni, Lib. xiii., p. 53.—Malavolti, *Parte iiiª*, Lib. ix., fol. 149 to 156.—Monluc, *Comment.*, Lib. iiiº, p. 188.

a vassal, he resolved on neutrality. Even when Mendoza hurried off from Rome and divested of all haughtiness implored his assistance, Cosimo still refused; nor was his resolution shaken when the former produced a brief from Charles bestowing Piombino on him without conditions: he accepted the gift and took possession of the place, but maintained his neutrality*. Cosimo afterwards endeavoured to persuade Charles that patience and dexterity would gain his objects better than arms; but the Peace of Religion signed at Passau in August, left the imperial indignation free to dart on Siena for a crime which his own lieutenants had caused by their oppressive rule. Don Pedro de Toledo was therefore ordered to muster all his disposable force and repair to Leghorn by sea; he soon arrived at Florence and vainly tried to procure Cosimo's active coöperation: the latter was still firm but consented neverthe-

less to supply guns and provisions and admit the troops
A.D. 1553.

within his territory, where after assembling sixteen thousand infantry and eight hundred horse Toledo died leaving his son Don Garcia in command with Alessandro Vitelli as his second †. This army entered the Senese territory by Val-di-Chiana and captured several small places, the most important of which, Lucignano, was given to Cosimo who unhesitatingly accepted it and thus again broke his promised neutrality ‡. His conduct was altogether equivocal, because when the viceroy's first proclamation appeared against Siena Henry II. despatched Lucrezia Borgia's son, the Cardinal Ippolito d' Este, (who represented him in that city) on an embassy to Florence where as a reputed friend of Cosimo he was received with unusual but deceitful honours to the great mortification of the Spanish party, who ignorant of Cosimo's dissimulation thought they perceived in

* Segni, Lib. xiii., p. 42.

† Sozzini says eight thousand Italian and two thousand Spanish infantry, with one thousand five hundred cavalry. (Vide *Rivoluzioni di Siena*, p. 93.)

He also asserts that the examination of Don Garcia's secretary took place at Montalcino. (p. 126.)

‡ Segni, Lib. xiii., pp. 48-53. — Sismondi, vol. xii., p. 135.

this close intimacy a change of political opinion adverse to the emperor *.

Meanwhile the invasion proceeded: Montucchiello surrendered after a month's siege; the trenches were opened before Montalcino which was defended by Giordano Orsini a young Roman recently dismissed from Cosimo's service: a two months' siege had made no impression on the place and Orsini became more daring in his sallies by one of which he nearly captured Don Garcia and Vitelli, and did take the former's secretary who after examination was sent at once to Siena for torture but escaped the application of it by a promise of general disclosure. Monsieur de Termes then took him into his closet and encouraging free discussion was made cognizant of a plot carried on for some months in Siena by Giulio Salvi and his brothers with Leone de' Ricasoli, Cosimo's ambassador, who being an intimate friend of Giulio had bribed him with 10,000 crowns to deliver up one of the city gates to Don Garcia as soon as he, Salvi, became general or Captain of the People. This post he was in immediate expectation of through the exertions of Termes and the French officers, who had requested the appointment for their own security, so great and general was the confidence in that family. Giulio and Ottaviano Salvi with two priests, all principals in the conspiracy, were examined and beheaded, and the sudden appearance of a Turkish fleet on the Neapolitan coast coupled with Charles's failure before Metz where Piero Strozzi served with great credit, made the emperor write an angry order to Don Diego Mendoza bidding him raise the siege of Montalcino and disband his army, since the Duke of Florence was determined to have the French in Siena. The Italians were accordingly dismissed, Don Garcia with the cavalry and Spanish infantry returned to Naples, and thus was Siena left in full possession of her domestic liberty and national

* Cini, Vita, Lib. iv., p. 197.—Galluzzi, Storia di Toscana, Lib. ii^o, cap. i^o, p. 284.

independence under French protection, but still tottering to her fall*.

Cosimo in fact had been playing a crooked game which raised suspicion and dissatisfaction in all parties: Charles was angry with him for not openly assisting in the war, and France and Siena frowned on him because he clandestinely supplied their enemies with provisions and artillery, for accepting Lucignano, and above all for plotting with their malcontents to place Siena by treachery in the hands of the Spaniards†. Seeing himself thus become an object of common resentment, kept in constant anxiety by the exiles, and detested by his own overburdened subjects, Cosimo was not unwilling to take the shelter of a peace, and by the pope's aid concluded a second treaty with Siena, gave up Lucignano at his desire, and again promised to keep himself strictly neutral between the French and Spaniards‡. The last condition was probably as insincere as it was difficult to maintain, for Cosimo's empire was not founded on the people's attachment or even on a public sense of expediency; he was hated by all classes, yet more feared than hated; and notwithstanding the wide-spreading or rather ubiquitary nature of his spy system he still needed the support of a foreign power to fall back on if pressed by domestic troubles or his own Florentine rebels; it at least became necessary that they should know and feel that he possessed such a protection; and it was the conviction of this necessity which made Charles V. treat him so arrogantly and induced Cosimo to suffer it so tamely. There is perhaps no country so ill governed as that wherein the supreme authority is independent of it for the ordinary resources of administration: feeling that it has a strong reserve of its own to fall back on, expediency displaces justice, strength overcomes right, native interests are separated from those of the ruling

* Sozzini, Rivol., pp. 125 to 142.—xiii., p. 53.

Adriani, Lib. ix., p. 637.—Ammirato, † Ibid., p. 58.—Adriani, Lib. x., p. 650.—Cini, Lib. iii°, pp. 188-191.

Lib. xxxiii., p. 492.—Malavolti, P. 650.—Cini, Lib. iii°, pp. 188-191.

iii°, Lib. x., fol. 157.—Segni, Lib. ‡ Galluzzi, Lib. ii°, cap. ii°, p. 22.

power and lightly postponed or negligently cared for: the will of government is commonly substituted for the welfare of the people, they are ruled with a feeling not their own, sects and factions are supported if not directly created, and because the subject state is only considered as a mine from which to extract riches in some form, steel, gunpowder, and every other coercive agent, is recklessly made use of to control it. A government to work well should like a spirited horse have its limbs free but a sharp bridle: Cosimo had no bridle except uncertainty, which quickly vanished and he bitted his subjects in return. He pressed the people with an iron hand and though his resources were all native, the certainty of foreign support enabled him to squeeze them out even to the last drop of human endurance. With such a policy he had no intention of observing the treaty a moment longer than was convenient: he saw Piero Strozzi becoming daily more experienced in war, for according to the historian Segni it was he that so gloriously repulsed Charles at Metz! A strange mistake or most ridiculous indulgence of national vanity to give this young and subordinate officer the credit of performing one of the Duke of Guise's most brilliant exploits! "This is the place" says Monluc, "where that illustrious Duke of Guise acquired immortal glory," and yet Segni by implication if not directly, gives all the credit to Piero. Strozzi though not a great or fortunate general was at least a prudent and an active one; a man of considerable talent, and a formidable adversary to Cosimo, who saw him loaded with honours by the favour of Henry, and Piero's own cousin the Queen of France*. He was also that monarch's lieutenant in Italy, extremely wealthy, and his name still popular and powerful in the mind and memory of the Florentines: his father died a victim to Cosimo's hatred and Piero had vowed ample revenge: to drive Cosimo from the

* Segni, Lib. xiii., pp. 49 and 57.—Monluc, *Commentari.*, Lib. iii^o, p. 188, Ital^a. Translation.

throne was the steady object of his life, the star of his ambition, in which the brightest rays of hope and hatred were concentrated; and to use his own expression he would "move heaven and earth, and even hell itself" to favour his intent. It was therefore impossible for Cosimo to hesitate a moment in his course, more especially as a plot to assassinate him and Andrea Doria had just been traced, as was averred, to Strozzi: wherefore enlisting all the Italians that Don Garcia had disbanded and engaging Gian-Jacopo de' Medici of Milan, Marquis of Marignano, surnamed "*Il Medicino*" as his general with ten thousand infantry besides five hundred horse; and also receiving upwards of four thousand Spanish and German auxiliaries from the emperor, Cosimo boldly undertook to drive the French from Siena at his own risk and cost*. It was a daring act and a vast effort; the offer was kept a profound secret but as willingly accepted by Charles as made by Cosimo, the latter being spurred on by the recent arrival of Piero Strozzi at Siena and his assumption of the chief military command. Cosimo's real object

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at this moment as well as his soundest policy was to see Siena free and independent of either French or Spaniards both being dangerous neighbours on his frontier: he also hoped much from the discord of factious citizens which by disgusting some and weakening all would finally open the road to conquest. The advent of Piero Strozzi as Henry the Second's lieutenant in Italy excited every Florentine malcontent both within and without the territory; the form of liberty once more flitted vividly before them; at Rome Bindo Altoviti an opulent merchant and father to the Archbishop of Florence, amongst many others, showed his opinions openly, in the Tuscan capital abusive lampoons against Cosimo were placarded everywhere with the words "*Viva Francia e moia l'Impero*"†. The King of France had some suspicions that the Cardinal of Ferrara, who

* Galluzzi, *Storia di Tosc.*, Lib. iiº, cap. iiº, p. 20.

† *Ibid.*, cap. iiiº, p. 38.

it was said partook much of the character of his uncle Cæsar Borgia, had been duped by the superior arts of Cosimo whose intimacy with the pope also made him anxious and uneasy. He was young ambitious and warlike, and already had armies in Scotland, Piedmont, Corsica, Parma, Mirandola, and Siena : two parties struggled and alternately ruled him, the Queen supported by the House of Guise on one part ; and the Grand Constable Anne of Montmorency on the other. The Italian expeditions were urged on by the Duke of Ferrara who was connected with the Guises ; they were promoted by the influence of Florentine exiles and cordially sustained by Catharine of Medicis who hated her cousin Cosimo. The Constable vainly opposed them as useless, maintaining that Flanders was the proper seat of war against the emperor, wherefore all the expeditions not approved of by him were neglected and languished. Piero Strozzi's appointment was due to the Queen and sanctioned by Montmorency on purpose to annoy the Cardinal of Ferrara whom he hated, and who was to remain as simple governor of Siena itself while Strozzi commanded all the royal forces in Italy. Henry had already tried to gain the Duke of Florence through Pope Julius, by renewing old negotiations, indirectly offering one of his daughters as the wife of Don Francesco, Cosimo's eldest son, and the Prince of Ferrara for his daughter but requiring something more than simple neutrality in exchange. If these had been accepted a strong French party would have arisen in Italy but the intended bride turned out to be illegitimate and the widow of Orazio Farnesè, so Cosimo declined the offer. He had already affianced his third daughter to Julius III.'s nephew Tabiano ; his eldest to Paulo Giordano of the Orsini ; and his second to Marcantonio Colonna ; thus uniting for a while these great and turbulent families*.

* Cini, Lib. iv., p. 197.—Galluzzi, 498.—Adriani, Lib. x., p. 662.—Lib. ii., cap. ii., p. 29.—Muratori, Segni, Lib. xiv., p. 72. Annali.—Ammirato, Lib. xxxiii., p.

In the beginning of 1554 Cosimo resolved to commence hostilities: he had up to that moment preserved the most profound secrecy and even stopped all communication with Siena by a rigid guard of inspection throughout the whole line of his frontier: during two whole days the gates of Florence, Pisa, and Arezzo were closed on slight pretences and no persons allowed to pass them either in or out: Girolamo degli Albizzi who had the military command as commissary, ordered every detachment scattered over the territory to march by night and concentrate at Poggibonzi and other places on the twenty-sixth of January. Cosimo's object was to attack the Senese simultaneously in the Maremma, the Val-di-Chiana, and the capital; to occupy Grosseto in the first, Chiusi in the second, and capture the fortress outside of Camullia gate in the third. To keep the Senese unsuspecting he had only a few days before despatched Francesco Vinto to the Cardinal of Ferrara for the settlement of some trifling business, and continued his own residence in Florence as the most central directing and controlling spot, as well for the troops in the field as the malcontents in the capital. He never once led the army in person, and in this war trusted everything to the Marquis of Marignano (a cunning cautious cruel man but one of the first generals of the day) and his own commissary Girolamo degli Albizzi who accompanied the camp. They marched from Florence with two thousand foreign infantry and four hundred Spaniards and joining the main body at Poggibonzi two hours before dark pushed forward towards Siena making one halt near Staggia to reform and issue the final orders of attack, Siena being then only six miles off. Violent rains and other accidents suspended Ridolfi Baglione's corresponding operations in the Val-di-Chiana as well as Federigo de Monlaiuto's combined land and sea expedition against Grosseto and other maritime towns; besides a subordinate attack on Massa Marittima which was to

be made by Lucantonio Cuppano governor of Piombino *. The same cause prevented a full muster of the Poggibonzi division, so that Marignano marched to Siena with only four thousand foot and three hundred horse but all good soldiers. Pushing forward his cavalry to the "*Palazzo del Diavolo*" within a mile of the town he drove in a French picket and following it with a small detachment of infantry carried the fortress of Camullia without a check and would have got possession of that gate also but for the prudence of a Florentine exile stationed there.

The Cardinal of Ferrara, completely duped by Cosimo's arts, was making merry at a carnival dinner when the skirmish at the Palazzo del Diavolo took place: his first impulse was flight thinking that the people were false, but Enea Piccolomini and Mario Bandini succeeded in detaining him with assurances of a vigorous resistance; the preparations for this were instantly made, and with so good a spirit that the cardinal became easy and convinced that his own blind confidence in Cosimo was the real and only cause of this surprise. Piero Strozzi, who had been away superintending the defence of the Maremma, hurried back to Siena and inspired new confidence, while Marignano was reënforcing his position towards the town so as to lodge five thousand men within gun-shot†: but excepting an unsuccessful attack on the Camullia gate which had been strengthened with incredible rapidity by the united labour of men women and children, he ventured on nothing beyond a rigorous blockade. Cornelio Bentivoglio attempted to retake the fort but was repulsed; and now Cosimo having fairly thrown off the mask issued a general order commanding all his subjects to molest the Senese nation at every point, and published a manifesto endeavouring to excuse his proceedings on the ground of self-preservation from French aggressions, the peace of Italy, and

* Galluzzi, *Storia di Tosc.*, Lib. ii., cap. iii., p. 39.—Cini, *Lib. iv.*, pp. 201-205. luzzi, *Lib. ii.*, cap. iii., p. 41.—Segni, *Lib. xiv.*, p. 80.—Ammirato, *Lib. xxxiii.*, p. 301.

† Cini, *Lib. iv.*, p. 206 &c.—Gal-

the preservation of Senese independence, not its destruction. Determined to proceed with vigour he engaged Ascanio della Cornia the pope's nephew with six thousand additional infantry, reënforced his colonels Giulio di Montevecchio, the Count of Santa Fiore, and Frangiotto Orsino, who were on his ordinary peace establishment; he increased the rank and command of Chiappino Vitelli and Ridolfo Baglione, an old and faithful servant, for Cosimo was not the man to neglect good instruments of power, ambition, or assassination. Thus with a rich skilful and determined hand he collected a force of about twenty-four thousand foot and a thousand horse under some of the ablest officers in Italy, but at the cost of more than 100,000 golden crowns a month all raised by extraordinary taxation in a period of incipient scarcity; and to the astonishment of Europe and even of the emperor himself thus boldly wrestled with the crown of France *! Thus began the second war of Siena two years after the first, and seven months after Cosimo had signed the treaty of peace with that republic but pretending friendship in the interval! Piero Strozzi had in all from eight to ten thousand men scattered over the country and between him and Marignano there seems at first to have been a frank understanding that the war was to be conducted with humanity, especially as regarded women, to which end some incipient courtesies passed between them: Cosimo on the contrary considering Piero as a mere rebel not only declined any intercourse but despatched circular letters to his most confidential agents with orders to make use of every means of destruction against him; he offered a reward of ten thousand ducats for his assassination besides other recompenses, and urged these nefarious instruments with injunctions of profound secrecy, to show their loyalty by their zeal in the work, each being persuaded that he alone

* Lettere di Principi, folio 175, vol. i^o, Cosimo to the Duke of Urbino, and fol. 176, to the Senese government.—Sozzini, Rivol., pp. 159-167.—Galluzzi, Lib. ii^o, cap. iii^o, pp. 39-46.—Ammirato, Lib. xxxiii., p. 501.—Segni, Lib. xiv., p. 80, &c.—Cini, Lib. iv., p. 209.

was thus trusted and thus honoured *. These attempts made the Strozzi cautious; he therefore never moved without a guard, eat his meals alone with his brother Robert, and avoided going out at night.

A preacher was employed by the Senese to sharpen popular vengeance who soon imparted a more ferocious character to hostilities: Marignano threatened to lay everything waste; Strozzi told him this would be worse for Florence because her territory was infinitely richer and more populous than that of Siena. Nevertheless things would still have been conducted according to the milder customs of war had not Cosimo declared his intention of putting every Florentine rebel to death who fell into his hands but of sparing other soldiers. This forced a counter-declaration from Strozzi that he would observe the laws of war with those troops alone who depended immediately on Marignano from whom he expected corresponding treatment; and with such a vindictive spirit did the second contest of Siena begin †.

Until the month of March nothing of any consequence occurred; Marignano contenting himself with gradually completing the blockade and devastating the country, which he could do at will because all the French troops except five hundred cavalry were shut up in the various strongholds. Castiglione, Rencini, and several small places on the Florence road were occupied to secure communications with Poggibonzi whence the besiegers' supplies were drawn, and almost every mill and aqueduct in the vicinity of Siena were destroyed. Marignano then continued investing and reducing

* Galluzzi, Lib. ii°, cap. iii°, p. 43.—*Lettere di Principi*, vol. i°, folio 176, *Lettera di Cosimo*, MS.—Besides the authority of Galluzzi, one of these circulars is published by Giovanni Rosini of Pisa, in the historical novel called "*Louisa Strozzi*." Another, almost word for word (probably written by

Cosimo's only *really* confidential minister and secretary *Concini*, but signed by the duke himself), the author was shown at Florence in 1838, and would have purchased it had the owner been willing.

† *Lettere di Principi*, vol. i°.—Galluzzi, Lib. ii., cap. iii. p. 43.

the Castelli one after another, hanging several of the inhabitants as they successively yielded and declaring that he would pursue the same course according to military law against any of them who were audacious enough to stand the first discharge of his artillery*. This cruelty had no effect: the Senese peasantry were a bold intrepid race and true to their country whoever were its governors; supplies ceased not to flow towards the capital, walled towns still held out, the same barbarities were repeated and endured, and war in its reddest garments stalked through the cowering land. Airola, Turrita, Asinalunga, Tolfa, Scopeto, and Chioccola bravely resisted and as bravely fell: in some cases the same military murders followed, for the implacable Marignano withdrew not his mailed hand, and all the country groaned†. At Turrita the Germans actually crucified a poor old woman who had either the spirit or the madness to persevere in crying out "*Lupa*," "*Lupa*," the national cry of Siena, instead, as she was ordered, of "*Duca*," "*Duca*," that of Florence! What began in sport ended through her obstinacy in the most horrid cruelty, for she was actually stripped naked and nailed up like a hawk to one of the gates, but like a maniac still shrieking "*Lupa*," "*Lupa*," until her mouth was gagged, besides worse and *unutterable* barbarity! She was there left to die; but every muscle of her face showing plainly that she still persisted in her endeavour to utter this national war-cry‡!

* It was a custom in those days that in all places untenable before heavy battering artillery, if it were brought up from the obstinacy of the besieged and once opened its fire, for the inhabitants to forfeit their lives when captured. Sismondi is incorrect in saying that Marignano hanged the greater part of the people of Airola: he hung only a few, besides some Florentine rebels that he found there: the former (seven peasants and two captains) were, according to the prevailing opinion, hung

because they had been plundering and burning houses in the Florentine territory, and were not pitied. These are all the inhabitants that "*Marignan les fit pendre pour la plus part*," &c. (Vide vol. xii., pp. 139-40.)

† Adriani, Lib. x., pp. 691 to 694.—Sozzini, Rivol., p. 182.—Sismondi, vol. xii., p. 139.—Ammirato, Lib. xxxiii. and xxxiv., pp. 503, &c.

‡ Girol°. Roffia, Racconti delle Fazioni della Guerra di Siena, Arch°. Storico Ital°, vol. ii°, p. 542.

From Asinalunga the people had fled but a Roman captain with four arquebusiers and four peasants resolved to defend the citadel : he was summoned, offered good terms and refused them : a few guns showed him his error, wherefore after an attempt to treat he surrendered unconditionally. His companions were allowed to go free, but he being brought before the Florentine general Vincenzo de' Nobili a nephew of Pope Julius III. was asked what had induced him to defend the place against such a force as then invested it? "I remembered," he said, "the virtues of the Romans and being a Roman with arms in my hand I wished to combat as a Roman." This put Vincenzo in a fury, who drawing his sword cut him across the head exclaiming, "And as a Roman thou shalt die." The man fell and was soon despatched by the attendants *. Such was the ferocious spirit of the age in which Bayard had early shone as the "*Chevalier sans peur et sans reproche*." In the month of March unknown to Marignano his general of infantry Ascanio della Cornia and Ridolfo Baglione marched to Chiusi in the Val-di-chiana which had been insidiously promised to them by the governor Santaccio da Pistoia, an officer of Strozzi's and a Florentine exile of the Cancellieri race. This man pretended a wish to be reconciled with Cosimo and for a sure pardon Chiusi was to be surrendered: wherefore it became necessary to coöperate with a strong force; but Piero Strozzi in concert with Santaccio, had on this supposition silently assembled four thousand men from various parts besides cavalry and concentrated them about Chiusi on the same night that the above-mentioned chiefs arrived with upwards of three thousand in full expectation of quietly having the place. They were deceived; the stratagem succeeded; three ambuscades were prepared and all with happy effect; they fought hard and fiercely; Baglione fell as a soldier should; Ascanio was made prisoner with

* Girol^o. Roffia, *Racconti delle Fazioni della Guerra di Siena*, Arch^o. Storico Ital^o, vol. ii^o, p. 542.

upwards of a thousand more; many escaped but numbers on both sides left their bones to whiten on the plains of Chiusi*.

The war soon assumed a character of desolation and cruelty; the towns of Belcaro, Lecceto, Monistero, Vitignano, Ancaiano and Mormoraia were successively taken; ruin was universal and complete, and there are few examples of war being waged with such barbarity on both sides as in this last struggle for Senese liberty†. Succours from France were scarce and slow; Henry was too closely pressed at home to attend thoroughly to Italian war and Montmorency was against it; but the hatred of every Florentine to the name of Medici still maintained a gallant spirit in the besieged. At Rome a number of Florentine gentlemen led by Bindo Altoviti, Paulantonio Soderini, Asdrubal de' Medici natural son of Ippolito, and about seventy others young and old, not only declared for the cause of France and Senese independence, but even the aged with their money and the young with both purse and person assisted in this brave defence and filled the Gallic ranks with noble Florentines. As a further encouragement Henry II. sent them a green silk banner inscribed with the word "LIBERTY" and under it the following line from Dante.

"Libertà vo cercando ch'è sì cara"‡.

The immediate consequence of this generous demonstration of sentiment was a general confiscation of their property in Florence, that of Bindo to the value of 50,000 ducats falling to the Marquis of Marignano by Cosimo's award; yet at Paris, Venice, Lyon and Ancona subscriptions were also made in the same cause, and it was remarked that whenever two Florentines met in foreign lands they might always be known to a bystander

* Cini, Lib. iv., pp. 217-222.—Segni, Lib. xiv., p. 80, &c.—Adriani, Lib. x., p. 694.—Malavolti, Lib. x., fol. 163.—Berº. Buoninsegni, Lettera sulla vittoria di Chusi, Arch. Storico,

vol. ii., p. 591.—Girol. Roffia, Raccont., p. 530, &c., Archivio Stor., vol. iiiº.—Sozzini, Relaz¹, pp. 192-4.

† Segni, Lib. xiv., p. 84.

‡ Liberty I seek which is so dear.

from their conversation being ever in abuse of Cosimo de' Medici *.

It would be as tedious as disgusting to thread more minutely the long series of incidents connected with this inhuman contest: it is enough to repeat after Segni, who wrote his narrative in the following year, that on both sides every species of the most atrocious cruelty was committed, by hanging the peasantry, violating women, butchering children, committing persons and things indiscriminately to fire, sword, and utter desolation; and finally destroying the harvests when famine was wasting the peninsula; all with so bitter a hatred as scarcely to be exemplified in the world's old history †. Strozzi had already induced Henry to send three thousand Grisons into Italy and orders to the Count of Mirandola for levying seven thousand Italian infantry, so that by their junction a considerable force might be brought to raise the siege of Siena now become a complete blockade, but from which Marignano could have detached six thousand men without fear ‡.

The King of France had always held up Florentine liberty as his ultimate object in the Tuscan war, and on this understanding Leone Strozzi Prior of Capua was induced again to enter his service in compliance with an urgent and personal request. Leone, who seems to have been scarcely inferior to Doria as a naval commander, had retired to Malta determined no longer to join in the wars between Christian nations: he had quitted the French service from disgust in consequence of the enmity of Montmorency with others of his party and family, and seems to have been a man of generous mind and austere virtue according to the standard of the day. "He

* Galluzzi, *Lib. iiº*, cap. iii., pp. 57 to 60, and cap. iv., p. 71.—Sismondi, vol. xii., p. 141.—Cini, *Lib. iv.*, pp. 235-6.—Adriani, *Lib. x.*, pp. 710-722-51.—Segni, *Lib. xiv.*, p. 90.—Ammirato, *Lib. xxxiv.*, p. 525.

† Galluzzi, *Lib. iiº*, cap. iii., p. 47.—Segni, *Lib. xiv.*, p. 84.

‡ Discorso sopra la Guerra presente, dal Marchese di Marignano. *Docum^l. di Storia Italia*, vol. ii., pp. 451-454.

was," says Monluc, "an officer of great value both by land and sea and a good servant of the king." This gentleman was appointed commander-in-chief of the French naval forces on the Italian coast and arrived at Port Ercole with two galleys of his own well manned and equipped intending when reënforced by a combined land and naval force from Corsica, and with Dragut's Turkish squadron, to attack Piombino and the whole line of the Maremma*. Meanwhile without losing any time he collected three thousand men for immediate action and no doubt would have done good service had he not been killed by the shot of an arquebuse while reconnoitring the small town of Scarlino preparatory to an intended attack.

On the eleventh of June Piero Strozzi commenced a bold movement by which he had determined to carry war across the frontier into the heart of the Florentine territory and if possible give his hand to the troops assembled at Mirandola as well as to another body expected from France, but in every case relieve Siena by forcing Marignano to follow him with most of his army. Taking about five thousand men of all arms he pushed rapidly on by night to Casole, Striscia, and San-Vivaldo; passed the Arno at the ford of *Calcinaia* a little below Pontedera by placing his cavalry above to break the force of the stream and showing the way himself to encourage his hesitating soldiers. With the aid of staves and ropes the infantry finally accomplished their purpose although the current was strong and the water up to their breasts. On the fourth day from Siena he was at Bientino and immediately pushed on his light troops and cavalry to Monte Carlo which he took by bribery; then spreading his forces over the whole country between Altopascio, Porcari and Sunata he secured the passage of the Serchio at Moriano for the troops under Mirandola who was

* Adriani, Lib. x., p. 711. — Documenti di Storia Italiana, vol. ii., p. 438. — Segni, Lib. xiv., pp. 84-85. — Lettere di Principi, vol. i°, p. 165. —

Comment. de Monluc, Lib. iii., p. 193 (translation). — Galluzzi, Lib. ii., cap. iii., pp. 57-59.

advancing by forced marches from Parma. On hearing of this inroad Cosimo instantly reënforced San Casciano and Empoli, commanded that every boat on the river below this place should be removed and ordered Marignano to follow Strozzi with all his power. The latter was much too cautious to run any risk against so bold an enemy who was expecting immediate succours; wherefore he refused to stir until his army was concentrated at Castellina by a recall of the detachments from Valdichiana: he then marched with five hundred horse to Poggibonzi ordering the rest of the army to occupy San Casciano; and urged by Cosimo, now angry at the delay, continued his rout to Empoli where a sufficient number of boats had been already collected to construct a bridge. Sudden floods came sweeping down from the hills and soon destroyed it; they overflowed all the low grounds and endangered the German soldiers encamped amongst them: this accident checked the whole march and compelled the army to cross in detail by the ferry-boats opposite Fucecchio, while the cavalry went a long round over the bridge of Signa with orders to rendezvous at Pistoia. Having at length succeeded in concentrating his forces about that city Marignano became alarmed lest Piero Strozzi should effect a junction with the Lombard army under the Count of Mirandola and thus outnumber him; wherefore four thousand Italians were ordered instantly to march from Siena leaving fifteen hundred in the fortress of Camullia and another detachment in a neighbouring convent which Strozzi had unaccountably permitted them to occupy. He then made Pescia his head-quarters where these reënforcements were to join him. During this time Cosimo was in the utmost alarm: his resources were nearly gone, his mercenaries, from Marignano downwards, insatiable; Florence was without troops or provisions; the people miserable discontented and impoverished; corn nearly ripe but still unfit to reap; public opinion in suspense about the results of war, and many only waiting for some decisive event to

declare against him. Barga too, detached as it was from the Florentine territory, surrounded by that of Lucca and Ferrara, threatened also by the army from Mirandola on its march through Garfagnana; altogether rendered the Duke's prospects dark and lowering; when suddenly Antonio Bocca with a detachment from Lunigiana made a forced march, threw himself into that fortress and checked the enemy after a sharp skirmish in the plain below*. Reënforced by these troops under the command of Monsieur de Forquevaulx, Strozzi resolved to attack Marignano at Pescia; but as only the cavalry arrived in good time at Moriano he led them promptly forward leaving orders for the Grison infantry to follow as they came up. The Marquis meanwhile was anxiously expecting Don Juan de Luna from Pontremoli with two thousand three hundred Milanese and had just despatched a body of horse under Leone da Carpi to reconnoitre and if possible hasten his march. Leone met Piero Strozzi's advanced guard on the Altopascio road and Chiappino Vitelli hearing the tumult brought up a squadron of cavalry followed by the Count of Santa Fiore and soon after by Marignano himself with five hundred arquebusers. A sharp skirmish ensued, but hearing that Strozzi's main battle was at hand the Marquis hastily retired to Pescia where finding this intelligence confirmed by some prisoners he held a council of war and instantly began retreating on Pistoia while Strozzi's troops entered at the opposite gateway. So precipitate was this movement that the pass of Serravalle between those cities was abandoned and had Piero seized it he might have cut off every supply from the Valdinievole, but Carlo Gonzaga's opportune arrival with four thousand fresh troops from Siena restored confidence and Serravalle was speedily reoccupied. Strozzi had made arrangements with Henry II. and Montmorency to be reënforced by a large body of French troops who were to land at Via Reggio and with his

* Cini, Lib. iv., pp. 240-248.

united force, which would then have been about sixteen thousand men besides fifteen hundred cavalry, attack the Florentine dominion while his brother was to march from Port Ercole to Siena and if possible raise the siege*. Seeing no signs of this reënforcement Marignano's army, so much strengthened, and Don Juan de Luna already at Pietra Santa, he became uneasy, wherefore taking all his cavalry and three hundred chosen arquebusiers on horseback he rode forward under the walls of Lucca in hopes of falling in with Don Juan either on the Pietra Santa road or at the passage of the Serchio at Ponte San Piero, near the former place. The Spaniard however, tired with the previous day's long march of eight-and twenty miles from Pontremoli, halted at Pietra Santa, and Strozzi after advancing to Mazzarosa was obliged to rejoin his camp without accomplishing anything. He nevertheless maintained the possession of Ponte-a-Moriano until Don Juan had reached Pisa, while eight hundred Spaniards, forming part of two thousand that were expected, had already disembarked at Leghorn. But Piero's situation now became dangerous; an enemy on each flank and a river in front without a bridge was no encouragement; so renouncing all hope of French succours he resolved on a retreat to Siena a movement that Marignano determined if possible to prevent. After previously ascertaining the exact position of the ford which had in consequence of heavy rains shifted more than a mile from its former place he marched at night, crossed the Arno in safety and established himself at Pontedera. Don Juan had in the interim advanced to Cascina but took alarm at the vicinity of Strozzi's force and in despite of all Leone da Carpi's exertions retreated hastily to Pisa. Marignano marched parallel to Strozzi up the right bank of the river towards Empoli where the pontoon bridge being unfinished a delay of some hours took place, but he crossed the following morning near Fucechio a little below San Miniato,

* Difesa di Piero Strozzi, &c^a, vol. iii^o, fol. 241, Lettere di Principi.

at the same time that his antagonist quitted Ponte-d'-Era, hastening on in hopes of bringing Strozzi to action, as his own credit and Cosimo's orders required. This was not Strozzi's game, and excepting a slight skirmish at the convent of San Vivaldo where his troops were so wearied and disheartened that a vigorous attack would have broken them, they arrived at Casole in safety. Marignano after passing the night at Montajone reached Poggibonzi by a movement to his left, pushing on fifteen hundred men under Vitelli to protect his lines at Siena against any sudden attack of Strozzi *. At Casole the latter heard of his brother's death before Scarlino; this was a heavy blow and shook his self-confidence, for Piero was accustomed to consult Leone's, probably superior judgment, so that now all hope of success in the Maremma was extinguished. Added to this, no supplies had been collected for his troops who were exhausted and famishing, wherefore the Mirandola division at once returned into Lombardy, Cosimo and Marignano allowing them to retire unmolested †.

Thus ended Strozzi's bold and able manœuvre which scared Cosimo and perplexed Marignano; and if the French succours had been true to their promise would probably have terminated the war, perhaps caused a revolution in Florence, but at least made Cosimo's territory the centre of hostilities ‡. Siena had a respite of fifteen days and therefore time to gather in such supplies as a devastated country could afford: unluckily but little was to be had and Piero to relieve the town led his troops into the Maremma where he received succours from the French squadron which had recently anchored at Port Ercole with Monsieur de Monluc the new governor of Siena. Piero Strozzi had lately written to the King of France explaining the

* *Rivoluzioni di Siena*, di Sozzini, pp. 244 to 253.—*Racconti di Girolamo Roffio*, pp. 539 to 557, vol. ii., *Archiv. Stor., Ital.*—Galluzzi, *Lib. ii.*, cap. iii., pp. 52-55.—Adriani, *Lib. xi.*, pp. 734 to 754.—*Ammirato*, *Lib. xxxiv.*, p.

518, &c.—*Segni*, *Lib. iv.*, pp. 86 to 91.—*Cini*, *Lib. iv.*, pp. 252-3 to 257.

† *Ibid.*

‡ *Difesa di Piero Strozzi al Re Enrico*, &c., *Lettere di Principi*, folio 241, vol. iii.

impossibility of his attending to the defence of Siena and its territory at the same moment and therefore requested assistance: on this Monluc was despatched, in despite of Marshal de Brissac's amusing endeavours to retain him in Piedmont, and arrived in the Maremma two days after the Prior of Capua's death *.

Meanwhile Marignano endeavoured to throw up new works before the Porta Romana exactly opposite to his position of Camullia, but finding the ground too dry and crumbling in consequence of the great heat, he removed to a position nearer the Arbia while Piero Strozzi and Monluc repaired to Siena where they were received by Monsieur Lansac; Monluc immediately assumed the command of the garrison and along with it, on the very day of his arrival, the conduct of a sharp skirmish in which Marignano also took a part, but was repulsed with great danger to his whole camp. Strozzi for the moment quartered his troops without the walls between Porta Nuova and Porta Tufi in the magnificent suburbs which at that time embellished Siena †. Monluc proposed a combined attack on the enemy's position but the plan was opposed, and Strozzi being still undecided Marignano decamped: marching towards Marciano he was followed by Piero who prevented its reduction and encamping opposite the enemy both armies remained uneasy for several days, Strozzi suffering much from his opponent's artillery. Neither would move through fear of being attacked at a disadvantage: they were only separated by a valley at the bottom of which was the bed of a torrent that became a road or river according to circumstances. The Grison division of Piero's army had become impatient to return home, his resources were nearly exhausted, provisions scarce, and water difficult and dangerous of access under the guns of the enemy: the marquis studiously avoided a general action and wished

* *Commentari di Monluc*, Lib. iii., pp. 188 to 195 (*Italian translation*).

† *Ibid.*, pp. 195-198.

exclusively to confine his efforts to the siege, for after the fall of Siena he thought the remaining territory would be like an arch without its key-stone and soon give way; besides a badly-fed and ill-paid army like Strozzi's could not long hold together. Cosimo on the other hand was impatient of delay, tired of the expense, low in treasure, disgusted with Marignano's mercenary conduct, the insatiable demands of his soldiers, the difficulty of feeding them; and was eager for a decisive blow*. Strozzi after vainly expecting his adversary to move was compelled to decamp; but with all the military folly of the time, which preferred a false and fancied point of honour to the public service, he determined to do so in open day and in face of the enemy. Monluc who was ill at Siena and like an old soldier appreciated such punctilios at their real value, sent letter after letter advising him to remove quietly by night or he would repent it, and adducing example on example to show the folly of such bravado, and the honour gained by many who had saved their armies by a contrary proceeding. All was vain: there were those about him who urged the wrong way, and Monluc's experience was, though at first listened to respectfully, ultimately neglected†. Strozzi however sent away all his baggage during the night, but disdaining any further advantage waited until dawn ere he struck his tents or made any other preparations for retreat. The enemy aware of his movements had been all night under arms and Strozzi's march towards Lucigniano had scarcely commenced when a body of skirmishers pushed out from the imperial camp closely followed by two thousand arquebusiers who began the fight with great spirit, the numbers being nearly equal on either side. Two thousand Spaniards, four thousand Germans, and from five to seven thousand Italians composed the ducal army, and from five to six thousand of the latter nation besides large divisions of Germans, French, and Grisons made up an

* Adriani, Lib. xi., pp. 771-2, 763-776. ment. di Monluc, Lib. iii^o, pp. 199 to
 † Adriani, Lib. xi., p. 783.—Segni, 204 (*Italian translation.*)
 Storia, Lib. xiv., pp. 93-94.—Com-

equal number on Strozzi's part. Marignano had twelve hundred light horse and three hundred men-at-arms, all superior to the French as that day proved, although Monluc considered the latter far better officered and experienced. Marignano in his letter to the emperor says that the French infantry exceeded his by six thousand men but this could hardly be, and is not borne out by Monluc or any other author.

Strozzi marched along the high grounds towards Foiano followed only by the enemy's arquebusiers, (for his cavalry were watering in the Chiana and came up in detachments) these galled Piero's rear and flank safe from the artillery which was in front, while Marignano worried his rear with two field-pieces. Skirmishing thus continued for four hours with the Florentine artillery and arquebusiers in front, the Spanish and German infantry following in compact bodies on the left, the Italians on the right, the light-horse supporting the Spanish and German bands; and the men-at-arms on the plain below. Strozzi worried by this pursuit halted at a place called "*Il colle delle Donne*" with his cavalry on the right, in front of the imperial horse. Two previous skirmishes, one having lasted ten hours and nearly brought on a general action, diminished both the spirit of Strozzi's men and his confidence in them; for though gallantly sustained, the superiority of the Imperialists was made manifest in both and the Frenchmen were by far the most severely handled; so that this impression coupled with the usual feelings of retreating soldiers gave an additional advantage to their enemy*. Both armies now descended from the heights to meet in the intervening vale which was cut by the bed of a torrent about ten feet deep, but with sloping banks easy to pass and descending towards the Chiana river where it carried the mountain waters, the valley opening there to a greater width; but neither general was willing to cross this obstacle and attack at a disadvantage. The adverse cavalry were opposed to each

* Monluc, Lib. iii^o, pp. 198-204.—Adriani, Lib. xi., p. 777.

other lower down in a more open part both being equally shy of crossing: when however the imperial men-at-arms came up under Don Juan de Luna and Marcantonio Colonna, then the Count of Santafiore who led Cosimo's light horse, and the Count of Nogulara Chief of the emperor's cavalry had orders to attack, more especially as there were symptoms of unsteadiness in the antagonist squadrons. With a long flourish of trumpets they dashed boldly across the torrent in two divisions at two separate passages and charged the French cavalry: at first there was some show of resistance, but even before the enemy reached them the Count of Mirandola's standard-bearer bribed as is said by Marignano, led the flight, and all the rest except five veteran squadrons threw down their arms and ensigns and following their leader's banner soon disappeared on the road to Foiano. Marignano now brought up his artillery which being principally directed against the Grisons shook their ranks and drove the whole mass of Strozzi's infantry some distance back, but still unbroken: disheartened by the cowardice of his cavalry and seeing his infantry so furrowed by the adverse guns Piero saw no hope but in one resolute attack, wherefore at the head of five thousand of his best soldiers he crossed the ditch and bore down the Spaniards with great courage and success, but the latter being well supported by all the German battalions soon rallied and maintained the combat long and vigorously with pike and sword and a continued discharge of artillery, in which Marignano was far superior. For two hours the Grisons bravely withstood the German infantry, but thinned out by repeated volleys they finally gave way, and the French discouraged by the flight of their own cavalry stood no better: they were all driven back in confusion across the hollow which being filled with dead afforded an easy passage, and their pursuers soon dispersed those who had not passed it. The native Italian levies from Rome which had never been engaged now caught up the panic and though as yet unassailed could scarcely be

kept together by their officers, so that when the imperial cavalry returned from pursuit the victory was no longer doubtful. Piero's army now fled in all directions and he himself though badly wounded, after having had two horses killed under him and doing all the duties of a general and good soldier, would have remained and died on the field, but was borne away by his friends and flying troops to Lucignano. Rallying all the fugitives he could find and leaving a garrison in the town which was full of provisions, he continued his flight to Montalcino but sent on Cornelio Bentivoglio with forty horse to prevent any movement in Siena where Monluc was apparently at the point of death. Nealy four thousand men were left dead on the field in this sanguinary encounter, and the ancient local appellation of "*Scan-nagallo*" became singularly appropriate for Strozzi is said to have lost twelve thousand men in killed and wounded*.

Its consequences were fatal to Siena, but to Cosimo the second of August 1554 proved as fortunate as the first of August 1537, for he forced Marignano to fight against his will and therefore took exclusive credit for the victory. Lucignano, Foiano, and all other garrisons in Val-di-Chiana soon yielded; Florence outwardly rejoiced while Siena, although in expectation of such a result from Monluc's warnings, was almost in despair but opposed a brave determined spirit to the enemy. Encouraged by Monluc and the victories of Brissac in Piedmont and fighting for a supposed yet delusive liberty, they bore nobly up against every privation and affronted every danger; but the character of that age was cruel and Marignano shared it equally with Cosimo wherefore both were dreaded as victors, and whether France or Spain succeeded Siena's subjugation was certain: between two such nations she never could have been free.

* Notizie della Vittoria de' Medici, vol. ii°, Ar. Storico Ital°, p. 585.—Racconti di Girolamo Roffia, pp. 559 to 579, vol. ii°, Arch. Stor. Ital.—Sezzini, Rivoluzioni, p. 271.—Monluc,

Lib. iii., pp. 200-205.—Cini, Lib. iv., p. 276.—Galluzzi, Lib. ii°, cap. iii., p. 67.—Adriani, Lib. xi., pp. 783-87.—Segni, Lib. xiv., pp. 100 to 105.

All who made any resistance in the country were slaughtered without mercy; all useless mouths on being ejected from the city were after due notice put to death by Marignano's command, except women, who were pillaged and driven back under the walls: some others were saved by the Spaniards, who generally the most barbarous, in this instance seem to have abhorred their own general's cruelty. The defeat of Marciano occasioned two opinions in Siena; one of immediate negotiation, the other of uncompromising hostility: the first was held by the moderate party or those whose great wealth was sufficient to seduce them from the more noble object of their country's freedom, fallacious as it was, to that of self-preservation apart from public safety. But the popular party, who now held supreme power and dreaded peace and imperial vengeance more than war and its horrors, determined to suffer every extreme rather than bow their spirit before Duke Cosimo's throne. They had sworn this to Monluc before the battle, and with sustained and unflinching resolution were now ready to maintain their oath, and even imitate the Saguntines of old, or any other desperate example to be found in history*.

Their constancy was put to a severe proof and they sustained it nobly, for by famine alone did Cosimo ever hope to subdue them: every peasant detected in supplying the city was at once hung, yet they daily risked the danger; devotion to the metropolis as queen of their commonwealth never flagged, and all their efforts tended to nourish her. It was early foreseen that whichever side remained master of the harvest would be master of the war; for this Strozzi made his inroad and would have reaped or destroyed all the Florentine crops if the French succours had been punctual instead of arriving a month, or as he himself says forty days after promise. The Maremma population which had been long diminishing was now reduced to a handful and fever was proportionally augmented by neglect of

* Monluc, Lib. iii^o, p. 201.—Adriani, Lib. xii., pp. 824-839, 845.

drainage and cultivation ; the city population of Siena alone dwindled during this exterminating war from thirty to ten thousand souls ; it was supposed that no less than fifty thousand peasants perished either by battle, famine, or executions in the hostile camp, besides the diminution by fugitives ; and Adriani tells us that few of the old inhabitants remained at the termination of hostilities *. There is unluckily a gap in Ammirato's history from the year 1554 to 1561 : Segni says but little, and died four years after ; and Malavolti dedicating his history to the Grand Duke Ferdinand is evidently shy of expressing his feelings, which were strong against the Florentines ; but Adriani is more open, and Galluzzi who had complete command of the historical materials of Florence and is believed to have used them fairly, says " that it was a horrid spectacle for humanity, to see the women and children who were expelled from Siena plundered and insulted by the Duke's soldiers and driven back by force to the gates to be readmitted and starved to death ; to see the artizans and poorer sort who were sent away put to dreadful tortures for the purpose of extracting intelligence of what was doing within, and then either hanged or forced back into the famishing town. The neighbouring peasantry who encouraged by the French or allured by gain to take provisions into the city were inevitably hung up along the highways, unless from their youth and strength they were deemed fit subjects for Cosimo's galleys. The cruelty of Marignano was naturally extreme, but he was ever spurred on by the Duke of Florence to spread terror and devastation over the country. From the commencement of hostilities a judge had been established in the imperial camp before whom all the poorer prisoners were brought and forced to swear allegiance to Cosimo ; their names were then registered, and if afterwards taken in arms they suffered death †." It was not force or love.

* Adriani, Lib. xii., pp. 816 and 836.—Segni, Lib. xiv., p. 114.

† Galluzzi, Storia, Lib. ii°, cap. v., p. 81.

of gain alone that made these people run such risks, they might have avoided the one and satisfied the other by bringing their produce to the besiegers' camp; it was a habit of reverence for the chief city of the state, the head of their republic, the seat of their ancient glory and independence, which moved them so powerfully as to brave every danger in its behalf, and glory in the death they suffered! No forced oaths ever bound them to the victors; their country became a desert not of terrestrial produce alone but of man, beast, castle, cottage, and villa! Nor were the peaceful plains of Florence much more enviable*; the sufferings of Siena were at least mitigated by their cause and the people's spirit was still nourished by the flickering hope of liberty; but Florence had no such comfort, her citizens already enslaved were now robbed, outraged, and urged forward reluctantly to crush their neighbour's independence while they forged stronger fetters for themselves. Cosimo's suspicion of everybody was increased so much by the conduct of the Roman Florentines who were all men of great rank and riches, besides the near neighbourhood of the war, that during its continuance he ordered the gates to be shut with some few exceptions against the egress of any citizen unless specially licensed by himself through his ministers; but many were compelled to make applications to him in person for he feared that numbers of young men would join the enemy, and above all he dreaded the absence or disaffection of the rich. A great scarcity too afflicted the land and was daily increasing; none of the last year's produce remained, and that of the present was bad, partial, and wanting; so that the people were in a state of despair from existing evil and recent sufferings, at one moment by the inroads of Strozzi, at another by the army of Marignano; and again by the depredations of other captains in divers parts of the country. Burned and plundered houses, ruined cultivation, granaries robbed and

* *Adriani, Lib. xii., p. 816.*

destroyed, fields trampled down, nothing safe from a fierce and lawless soldiery, ill-paid by the duke, worse by the emperor; who lodged and lived at free quarters without any bridle but their will! Such was the condition to which two rich and fertile provinces were reduced by the ambition of two men neither of whom had any right to the one or the other!

Strozzi when somewhat recovered from his wounds immediately tried the Count of Montalto and beheaded him for surrendering Lucignano without a blow; he then brought the Count of Mirandola's standard-bearer to justice of whose treachery there seems little doubt as twelve tin flasks full of golden crowns under the name of Trebbiano wine were sent to him by Marignano the day before the battle*. "They were carried," says Sozzini, "by a countryman named Matteo Lodola escorted by many soldiers, which Matteo after the war confessed the whole to me, for I had not before believed it†".

These executions though perfectly justifiable were at the moment indiscreet and at variance with the extreme laxity of Italian discipline, for fidelity and honour were secondary considerations to personal safety and self-interest amongst the mercenaries of that day and country. The consequence of this severity, combined with his misfortunes and expected disgrace at court, was great personal disgust and disaffection to Strozzi amongst those who had for a long time followed his standard; yet he was a good soldier, an able officer, and had high and just notions of what was necessary for both; he was vigorous, bold, resolute, firm, and patient himself; and required these qualities in those under him to an extent incompatible with existing customs and loose Italian discipline. Naturally

* Redi, in his inimitable Dithyrambic "Bacco in Toscana," calls this amongst other wines, "*Il vero Oro potabile*," an epithet realised by Marignano, and perhaps sarcastically used by the poet in allusion to this fact.

"Io di Pescia il Buriano,
Il Trebbiano, il Columbano
Mi tracanno a pieno mano:
Egli è il vero Oro potabile," &c.

† Sozzini, Rivoluzioni di Siena, p. 270.

enterprising and inflamed with the passions of glory hatred and revenge; carried onward by his own energetic feelings and zeal for his master's service, he forgot, as it often happens, that his followers were not sustained by the same motives or the same spirit; that they had not the same responsibility, the same prospects of fame and honour, nor the same high objects; and that therefore neither mind nor body could second his wishes to the desired extent or bear as he did, thus morally strengthened, the fatigues and physical sufferings of the war. He expected too much, was never a popular general and seldom a fortunate one; nevertheless his enemies in court and camp were disappointed, for Henry II. with a generous sympathy for his courage and misfortunes sent him the truncheon of a French marshal in return for his defeat at Marciano*.

Collecting the remnant of his forces at Montalcino Strozzi proceeded with a small escort of horse and a good body of infantry to Siena which he reached with great personal risk, but was induced to run this chance by the intelligence of Monluc's death and also that Lansac, whom he had immediately ordered from Rome, was made prisoner: the latter story was true, but Monluc recovered after every physician had quitted him, and in this state was visited by Piero when he entered Siena †. Leaving Cornelio Bentivoglio in command of his troops amounting to three thousand men, Strozzi took leave of Monluc, now convalescent and the only person informed of his intentions, secretly quitted Siena, made his way safely through the besiegers' lines, and after great perils arrived at Montalcino where he again prepared for active warfare ‡. It now being clear that the fall of Siena was at hand Charles the Fifth declared that state forfeited by rebellion to the imperial crown and forthwith invested Prince Philip, or the King of England as he was then denominated, with the sovereignty; but annexing the power of transferring it on feudal tenure to a third party.

* Segni, Lib. xiv., p. 107.—Adriani, † Monluc, Lib. iii^e, p. 208.
Lib. xii., pp. 802-814. ‡ Ibid.

Meanwhile the blockade continued with one bold and nearly successful attempt at escalade, by which the outwork of Camullia was stormed, captured, and through Monluc's energy, recaptured in one night; and another to batter down the wall between "*Porta Ovile*" and the convent of San Francesco with even less fortune, but by Cosimo's orders not Marignano's suggestion. A.D. 1555. After this the latter fell back into the more congenial system of dull blockade and cold-blooded barbarity, intercepting supplies and mutilating or hanging their rustic conductors, with occasional attacks and alarms to give some variety to the scene*. The sufferings of the besieged continued to be borne not only with resolution but spirit, and even an assumed cheerfulness that led them to celebrate their games and festivals in order to deceive the enemy: this could not be for their condition was too well known, although Strozzi who was again active in the field hoped that Marshal Brissac's successes in Piedmont would force Charles to recall his troops from Tuscany. But Cosimo spared no pains or cost to keep both the emperor and his army in good humour, yet the possibility of their being recalled made him anxious for peace, wherefore he addressed the Senese government with an assurance that he warred not against the liberty of Siena but only required the republic to place itself again under imperial protection, and then offered himself as mediator to negotiate a treaty which would secure all their privileges†. Henry II. had already given the Senese permission to treat, and in the month of March when every species of nourishment had failed, when no wine was to be found, when mules and horses, dogs and asses, and even all the cats, mice, and rats were eaten up; or were one by chance discovered, it was sold if a rat, for a ducat, if a cat for four; when neither herb nor grass remained; when soldiers and citizens were falling dead from inanition in the

* Sozzini, *Rivoluzioni di Siena*, vol. ii°, p. 402, *Archivio Stor. Ital.*

† Adriani, *Lib. xii.*, p. 847.

streets; when shadows of human beings stalked silently through the desolate city; when all hope of succour, all expectation of independence had departed, the liberty of death alone remaining: then, but not until then, did this intrepid people begin to think of a convention*. Strozzi urged them by letters to hold out in hope of aid from Piedmont while he refused the offers of the French ministers at Rome to levy Italian soldiers in whom he had no confidence. He felt that with Italians alone, whatever their numbers or quality, he could never withstand the Spanish and German veterans of Cosimo's army; no trust according to his belief could be placed in them and he preferred their absence. Six hundred Germans, unable any longer to suffer, were by his command sent out of the town secretly with orders to join him at Montalcino; but his letters were intercepted, deciphered at Florence, and then forwarded to their destination: the consequence was an ambuscade and combat with immense slaughter and the escape of only two hundred to Montalcino.

In this state of things four ambassadors were despatched to Florence and remained four days in the palace insisting on the preservation of their liberty with other conditions inadmissible by Cosimo even had Siena been full of provisions; wherefore he sharply dismissed them with injunctions not to return unless they had full powers to treat. This stopped all negotiation for a fortnight when eight other ambassadors appeared, and on the twenty-eighth of March succeeded in concluding a treaty by which Siena was to remain free but the emperor to nominate twenty of the governing Balia; that a garrison of Spanish, Italian, or German infantry was to be admitted, but at Cosimo's option both as to number and nation; that no citadel or fortress should be

* There were of course occasional small supplies brought in by daring and mercenary peasants, of fowls, eggs, pigeons, &c., but they were rare, partial, and sold at enormous prices. Capons 7 golden crowns a pair: fowls at 5, &c. Nor was there wanting occasional supplies of wine, oil, meat, and cheese at proportional prices; but these were only for the few and rich, and for them but rarely and by chance. (*Vide Sozzini*, p. 404.)

constructed without the people's consent; that the French troops should be allowed to retire where they pleased with arms and flying colours; that the forts thrown up round Siena should be demolished; and that a general amnesty except for rebels should be proclaimed. These conditions were signed on the second and the imperial garrison entered Siena on the twenty-second of April the inhabitants being allowed to emigrate or remain as best suited them. This permission was taken full advantage of and a vast number of the most illustrious citizens quitted the town with the French garrison: retiring to Montalcino they there endeavoured to preserve a shadow of the ancient commonwealth until the peace of Chateau-Cambresis in 1559 reduced them to the common level of Tuscany*.

Thus fell the Senese republic after fifteen months' determined and honourable resistance during which the people sacrificed everything in hopes of prolonging for a little while that liberty whose turbulence never yet destroyed the magic of its name†!

But the capitulation displeased Charles who coveted Siena, and it was the knowledge of this which induced Cosimo to grant conditions so favourable; for as an independent Italian prince he deprecated the vicinity of imperial power and hoped in time to become lord of that country: the emperor and all his cabinet were however indignant and for some time a ratification was refused, nor was it ultimately granted except from pure apprehension of alienating the powerful Duke of Florence‡.

The twenty-first of April opened on a melancholy scene! Cosimo's army was marshalled outside the walls to witness

* Monluc, Lib. iii., pp. 253-260.—Sozzini, Rivol. p. 411, &c.—Cini, Lib. v., pp. 300-334.—Galluzzi, Lib. ii°, cap. iv. and v., p. 87, &c.—Botta, Storia d'Italia, Lib. ix., p. 318.—Muratori, Anno 1554-5.—Malavolti, Lib. x., Parte iii., folio 166.—Adriani, Lib. xii., p. 864.—Sismondi, vol. xii., p. 145.—Segni, Lib. xiv., p. 171.

† We here take leave of Orlando

Malavolti, the Senese historian, who by a long illness ending in death was prevented, if he ever intended it, from carrying on his history. The fall of Siena is the Republic's death; all subsequent matters are provincial and belong to Florence, Florence herself belonging entirely to the Medici.

‡ Adriani, Lib. xiii., p. 875.

the evacuation of Siena: two ranks of German and Spanish veterans glittering with burnished steel were arrayed in double lines beyond the Roman gate; six Gascon battalions and four Italian columns, diminished in numbers, scarce of raiment, and wasted by famine, but still well armed and all resolute soldiers, marched in slender ranks with flying colours through the archway which scarcely echoed their famished tread, yet showing to their robust and well-equipped opponents what brave men could suffer in an honourable cause! Then came a train of hopeless and ruined citizens flying from imperial vengeance: they had boldly upheld the cause of liberty and would not stop to see the once free dwellings of their forefathers trampled on by insolent strangers. Many with the fate of Florence in their mind smiled bitterly at the idea that imperial villany would ever keep faith with helpless misfortune, or even suffer a whisper of liberty to circulate through Siena's empty streets and palaces. The amnesty of Cosimo they knew was forced; forced by the honest energy and sagacity of Monluc; and in the Medici's gentleness they only detected the sheathing of the tiger's claw under its smooth deceitful velvet*.

Two hundred and forty-two noble families and three hundred and forty-five of plebeian blood issued from the gate, ruined, friendless, and trusting to the pity of the stranger! Aged women, and infants, and noble matrons were placed on mules which the charity of Monluc had procured for them from the enemy's general; the young women were afoot carrying their infants in cradles on their head; more than a hundred maidens followed these disconsolate parents, and numbers of young men leading a wife in one hand and a daughter in the other were seen flying from their native city with a dark and desolate country before them, where, says Monluc, there was not a living spirit to give food to a horse, from Montalcino to Siena and from Siena to Florence†! "I had seen," adds this

* Monluc, Lib. iii^e, p. 257.

† Ibid., p. 254.

honest and compassionate soldier, "I had seen a lamentable spectacle when all useless mouths were ejected from the city; but I beheld more than equal misery in the departure of these unfortunates who left Siena with us, and in those who remained! Never in my life did I behold so painful a separation: and though our soldiers had suffered every possible hardship still this separation afflicted them, and the more because it was not in their power to preserve the public liberty. As to me I suffered more; I could not contemplate this calamity without tears, and sorrowing deeply for this people who had shown themselves so fervid in the preservation of their freedom*".

When the long array of famished soldiers and miserable citizens had cleared the gate they received a scanty supply of food from Marignano himself; the Spanish soldiers brought provisions of their own accord, distributing bread as the people passed their ranks, and thus saving the lives of from two to four hundred persons: yet in despite of this, more than fifty people sunk down and died that day, and for the four following days six ounces of biscuit was the allowance of each individual. Monluc killed his horse and with oil from the lamps of churches, wild mallows, and common nettles, it was cooked and distributed amongst the soldiers. Like the Israelites of old by the waters of Babylon, they sat down to weep under the willows of the river Trezza at Arbiarotta, and here Monluc divided some of the food given him by Marignano into two parts, one he gave to the Senese exiles the other to his soldiers; a little, and but a little to each, for there were only four flasks of wine and six loaves amongst the multitude†. They then resumed their march to Montalcino, but through a desert! no seed had been sown, for two years no spade had touched the soil, the plough-shares lay rusting on the ground, their woodwork was in ashes; the few remaining animals were wild, the instruments of husbandry, the wrecks of houses, and their inmates, were

* Monluc, Lib. iii^e, pp. 259-60.

† Ibid., pp. 261-262.

all scattered far and wide, not even a domestic animal now prowled about the blackened dwellings, and in some places perhaps the master's bones hung bleaching on a neighbouring tree. "*From Montalcino to Siena, from Siena to Florence no living spirit moved upon the face of the land*"*! These are emphatic words from a soldier and an actor in the scene, but not a destroyer. At Buonconvento Strozzi and Monluc met and embraced yet were each unable to speak; the misfortunes of both for a moment overcame them; they then turned and led their famished comrades slowly on to Montalcino †.

In that town the remnants of Senese liberty were collected; the shadow of an ancient republic rested for a while on its old grey walls as faintly as their hopes, but it soon passed over the mouldering dial and disappeared for ever!

COTEMPORARY MONARCHS.—England: Henry VIII. to 1547; then Edward VI. to 1553; then Mary, married Philip Prince of Spain in 1554.—Scotland: James V. to 1542; then Mary, an infant eight days' old.—France: Francis I. until 1547; then Henry II.—Spain: Charles V.—Portugal: John III.—Sicily and Naples: Charles V.—Popes: Paul III. (Farnese) to 1549, Giulio III. (del Monte, Florentine) to 1555, Marcello II. (Cervino) 1555, Paul IV. (Caraffa) 1555.—Emperor: Charles V.—Sultan: Solyman.—Ferdinand of Austria, King of the Romans.

* Monluc, Lib. iii^o, p. 254.—Cini, Lib. v., p. 331.—Adriani, Lib. xiii., p. 892.

† Monluc, Lib. iii., p. 262.

CHAPTER IV.

FROM APRIL 1555 TO JANUARY 1560.

COSIMO THE FIRST

DUKE OF FLORENCE AND SIENA.

It has been shown that even after the Florentine republic fell, the government although monarchical still retained its wonted forms and magistracies, but so as to concentrate all real power in the sovereign while many citizens enjoyed political honours and apparently participated in his authority. During the wild licentious reign of Alexander this was not altogether illusory, because his pleasures necessarily forced business into subordinate hands; but under Cosimo the scene was changed, yet the constitution still preserved the semblance of a monarchy surrounded by republican institutions when it was really an absolute sovereignty and the most despotic in Christendom. At Cosimo's election the Senate or council of "Forty-eight" deeming that a quarterly appointment of four state councillors might be insufficient to control his power and retain their own, added a permanent privy council which they imagined would direct the course of public government. The cabal that placed Cosimo on the throne originated this project and influenced the assembly so as to secure their own election as members of his cabinet: Guicciardini, Vettori, Acciaiuoli, Niccolini, Matteo Strozzi, and Ottaviano de Medici hoped, if not from Cosimo's gratitude, at least by these means to secure a paramount influence in his councils, and succeeded for a while because they were just then necessary;

A.D. 1555.

but when once steadied by the victory of Monte Murlo, Cosimo quickly dispensed with their support and demolished the ladder by which he himself had mounted. Ottaviano de' Medici soon became his servant; Vettori and Guicciardini died and the rest were charged with Pistoian affairs, an important office, because of the turbulent factions unrepressed by republican policy but which Cosimo's interest led him to destroy. The second duty of this council thus separated and made to supersede the first, relieved Cosimo from inconvenient counsellors; but the whole machinery of government powerful as it was, became from its still free and complicated nature unsuited to his opening views of despotism, which determined him to change it. In the beginning he assisted personally at the council-board and promulgated all public acts as the decrees of "THE DUKE AND COUNCIL OF THE FLORENTINE REPUBLIC," the latter epithet having been preserved to flatter public prejudice with the notion of existing liberty: but when possession of the citadels brought comparative independence Cosimo at once disregarded forms, appointed his lieutenants to preside in rotation at the council-board, and discontinued his personal attendance on purpose to lessen that dignity which it naturally derived from the sovereign's presence. The next step was to make every other magistracy and provincial governor the mere instruments of his pleasure and compel them to send periodical reports of every official act, whether proposed or accomplished, so that their whole authority soon dwindled into the privilege of registering his will and their duty in executing it. The ducal "*Rescripts*" which at first were mere indications of the sovereign's wishes addressed as general instructions to the several courts, finally became authentic documents and legal decisions without any other formality. All foreign despatches, public acts, patents, and every state paper ultimately ran in the Duke's name alone without any mention of the councillors, except in preambles to those laws which he occasionally commanded them to promul-

gate. Good policy made him insist on the impartial distribution of office, and secure civil justice by severe laws repressive of aristocratic power, to protect the weak: this to a certain point soothed the people and rendered office, deprived of power or patronage, an object of livelihood rather than of political ambition. Cosimo thus made himself the centre of a thousand diverging rays and on the ruins of a fierce democracy built the most absolute monarchy in Europe.

This plan was originally proposed by Clement VII. who placed his minister Francesco Campana about Duke Alexander to carry it out: that prince however was far too ungovernable and debauched to pursue a steady course, but with the youth and seriousness of Cosimo who continued Campana in the chief secretaryship and deferred to his judgment, it was successful. Campana died in 1546 and was succeeded by Lelio Torello da Parma as chief secretary of state: he was a lawyer of great eminence who had served the Duke's father, and these two, both creatures of the wily sagacious Clement, were the directors of Cosimo's youth in the art of government. Foreign affairs according to the then existing custom were managed more by the verbal and personal intercourse of diplomatic agents than by despatches; these were avoided from the total want of confidence that prevailed both amongst private individuals and public men, coupled with the general suspicion occasioned by official treachery or indiscretion in public servants. Secret agents therefore being constantly employed in foreign politics Cosimo's real sentiments on this subject were a matter of doubt and mystery never clearly or generally known to the Florentines, and as far as documents are necessary still in some measure wanting for history. His personal application, the result of a particularly jealous and active mind whatever were his motives was exemplary in its constant action; he read and signed all private petitions, all ministerial and state papers, and with so distinct an expression of his will as to allow no room for subterfuge.

He directed the proceedings of the criminal magistracies with absolute sway, kept a vigilant eye over both public and private expenditure accompanied by a rigorous and searching inspection of its administration even to the smallest particulars. His spy system was penetrating and universal; he seemed to have one great eye and ear embracing the civilised world! nor was his secrecy less proverbial, wherefore his autograph correspondence became very extensive, every letter being copied filed and registered by himself so fearful was he of any interference! His ministers with an occasional exception were mere tools, and so much did everything emanate from him that even when he created a new council called the "*Pratica segreta*" to settle jurisdictional disputes and preserve the ducal rights, he invariably predetermined and directed all their proceedings. With the aid of Torello and Niccolini he revised and regulated the whole code of Florentine law, reformed ecclesiastical affairs, reduced the secular clergy to a stricter discipline, and when a benefice became vacant took instant possession of it in his own name until an incumbent were appointed. He checked the extreme licentiousness of the regular orders and was particularly and justly severe on the mendicants, especially the Franciscans, who were accustomed to turn those nunneries under their spiritual direction into ecclesiastical brothels. He also assigned a certain age under which no young persons of either sex were to be admitted into convents: he acted rigorously against every book and person belonging to the Lutheran heresy, for it had made some progress in Naples Ferrara and Lucca, and even impinged on the orthodoxy of Florence. He imparted more activity to the inquisition, which had long existed under strictly modified regulations after the government of 1345 found it necessary to repel the encroachments of that tribunal. Cosimo, without relaxing the ancient law, now admitted three deputies from Rome to act in concert with the Florentine inquisitor, but still subservient to the civil power. The consequence was an "*Auto*

da Fe," in 1551 not of Iberian character, as books alone were burned, but of twenty-two individuals who dressed in hoods and frocks painted with crosses and devils, were led through the city and after acknowledging their errors readmitted into the church. Several women also underwent a more private punishment, and as some of the delinquents were of high rank it shows that heretical opinions had made considerable impression on the Florentines*. Decrees were also issued for the improvement of morals, (blasphemy being punished by perforating the tongue) and other laws promulgated so severe in themselves and so rigidly executed as to drive many timid and culpable citizens from the country.

Against his rebels and exiles Cosimo's conduct was barbarous, implacable, and utterly vindictive: by a decree of 1557 any communication with them involved the correspondent in their crime: by another in 1539 they were forbidden to be received on the frontier; rewards were offered to their murderers; a general obligation was imposed under severe penalties to reveal the place of their concealment; and even women were not exempt from punishment for violating these laws. All Florentine subjects were forbidden to serve a foreign state without the ducal leave; fathers being held responsible for sons, uncles for nephews, brother for brother; and even the infant children of rebels were made to suffer for the offences of their parent by being rendered incapable of inheritance even to maternal property or of becoming heirs by will: all such property was finally confiscated and the culprit considered as having died intestate on the day of his crime whether tried or not; such confiscations being subject to reversal if other more distant claims could be proved. The children of exiles were banished in perpetuity, and even infants under twelve years of age the moment they reached that period were struck down by this odious law. Niccolini to his credit remonstrated against so

* Platina, Vita di Paulo, Lib. iv., p. 55 — Galluzzi, Lib. iº, cap. viii.

abominable a decree, but Cosimo was implacable and no man dared oppose him ; it was called "*La Legge Polverina*" from Jacopo Polverina of Prato its originator, a minister much employed by Cosimo : but this extreme rigour characterised all his actions and the attempted reformation of manners exasperated without correcting or frightening the people. Secret accusations, punishments, exiles, and confiscations, excited and augmented private hate and rather fostered than subdued the ancient republican fierceness, in despite of all the encouragement of science and literature intended to correct it. Private misery and public exactions augmented crime, aggressions, quarrels, and homicides, and these again were met by more rigorous laws ; the last being subjected to nearly the same treatment as rebels : untried, unexamined, and without any consideration of circumstances, reputed man-slayers might be murdered by whoever coveted the reward offered for these unholy deeds. Nor could the homicide himself ever expect to return *except by committing another murder, and proving that with his own hands he had killed a Florentine rebel* ; or in other words a private enemy of Cosimo ! Such was his justice ! Such his barbarous policy ! and such his modes of promoting morality !

In accordance with the then general custom of great Italian cities public informers were established amongst the tradesmen or other constant residents in each street of the capital ; this was subsequently reduced to an organized system of spy-police by dividing the city into fifty departments under the name of "*Syndicates*" in each of which one or two informers were nominated according to the population. A purse of the most eligible names for this worthy office was kept by government and the informers annually drawn from it : their duty was to denounce the slightest misdemeanor which occurred in their district, for which information they received not only a regular salary but rewards proportioned to its importance, besides being exempt

from responsibility for personal debts! This odious system was subsequently extended to the whole Florentine dominion*. Cosimo's searching taxation penetrated into the vitals of Tuscany, nothing escaped him; every purse was drained, every trade injured, every family impoverished; universal hatred pervaded the country but terror prevailed over hate; his hand was too heavy; men feared to move; armies maintained his power and he maintained them with his people's blood: the misery of 1554 and 1555 was increased by his wars and universal scarcity: the harvest failed, corn was assized at five lire† per "staio" or Florentine bushel, an apparently high price but far below the market value, and of this Cosimo took three lire and a half by direct taxation in that article alone! The consequence was a cessation of imports, a withholding of corn from the market, and augmented misery: the assize was then removed and grain flowed in rapidly but rose to eight lire a bushel‡: this was a famine price and the poor could not purchase, for the relief did not descend to their means; they still were starving and died in multitudes: eighteen thousand famished beggars, or about one third of the population, swarmed in Florence alone, and numbers sank under their afflictions: by-lanes, street corners, low walls, obscure cellars and public squares, served as the death-beds of these miserable creatures; nor did the eight thousand pounds of bread which Cosimo ordered to be daily issued to the people do much towards their alleviation!

Equal wretchedness overwhelmed the rural districts; whole families, nay whole villages silently perished and were forgotten; and full sixty thousand souls, between the capital and country ascended to their Creator through famine and suffering! Many

* Galluzzi, Lib. iº, cap. viiiº.

† The silver "*lira*" of this reign weighed three pennyweights, nineteen grains. (Vide *Orsini, Storia della Moneta, &c.*), but whether this *lira* is here understood seems doubtful.

‡ This according to the then proportion between a *lira* and golden crown would, weight for weight, equal about nine shillings at least of our present money.

more were subsequently despatched by a disease called the "*petecchie*" much resembling plague, which was probably the effect of starvation. Such were the general character and consequences of Cosimo de' Medici's early government, his relentless ambition, his wars, and his revenge *!

Pope Julius III. died in March 1555 with the reputation of a worthy pontiff, but more from his negative than positive virtues; he received praise for not doing harm rather than for having accomplished any good: his nepotism was under the general standard, and he gave his time up more to sensual enjoyments than government. One of his most expensive and innocent pleasures was the creation of a villa and extensive pleasure grounds three miles in circumference, outside of the *Porta Flaminia* or "*del Popolo*," in emulation as was said of Nero's celebrated gardens. It was entirely walled in, divided into several distinct species of cultivation, and adorned with buildings, porticos, arches, fountains, statues, and columns; so that the "*Vigna di Papa Giulio*" became as famous as its more ancient prototype. Amongst these alluring shades he neglected the cares of government and abandoned himself to the delights of the table and every social enjoyment, but even this was a blessed change from the fire sword and famine of his predecessors †. To the general surprise and against his own inclination Marcello Cervino of Montepulciano succeeded on the ninth of April 1555 and added another instance of the brevity of those popes' lives who did not change their name on assuming the tiara. He died on the first of May at the age of but fifty-five regretted by all, for he was well known as a wise, gentle, disinterested and moral man, full of piety and learning, and promising a good and glorious pontificate. So free was he from nepotism that none of his relations were even permitted to reside in Rome, not even a brother; nor would he allow his

* Segni, Lib. xiv., p. 113.

† Muratori, Annali.—Platina, Vite, p. 548.

brother Alexander's two children whom he had previously adopted, to be visited by anybody except as private individuals, in which character and not beyond, he declared his intention of providing for his kinsmen. He had while a cardinal projected extensive reforms in the church and was anxious for a general council in the hope of healing the existing schism by conciliation: had he fulfilled what he professed, and from his well-known character such results were probable, this pontificate would have been a censure on all preceding popes and a blessing to Christianity. Amongst universal vice and corruption the contemplation of such beings refreshes the weary spirit, such sparks preserve the flame of virtue and are the ark of moral salvation*.

On the twenty-third of May Marcello the Second's place was filled by Giovan-Pietro Caraffa under the name of Paul IV. a man of very different stamp who soon showed that peace was not his favourite watchword. Caraffa was of a noble Neapolitan family and called the "Cardinale Teatino" from his bishopric of *Chieti* which in Latin was "*Theate*." He had always been considered as a person of saintly character who despised mundane honours, and more especially because along with Gaetano Tiene of Vicenza, afterwards sainted, he instituted the rigid order of the "*Teatini*" in 1528. Caraffa was the principal adviser of Paul III. who had made him a cardinal; he strongly advocated the establishment of the Inquisition at Rome and was himself the first builder of its prisons in that city†. His piety and humility had hitherto been exemplary but many detected both fox and wolf under the lamb's covering and dreaded the consequences. Impetuous, passionate, hard, and inflexible; full of zeal for what he called religion, and rigorous to excess, the deep-sunken and fiery eye proclaimed his inward character, yet as if still moved by the original impetus of

* Cini, Lib. v., p. 335.—Platina, Vite, p. 550.—Muratori, Annali.

† Platina, Vite de Papi.—Muratori, Annali, 1559.

hypocrisy his incipient acts were of clemency and liberality. Beguiled by such conduct the Romans rather prematurely erected his statue in the capitol, and a body-guard of one hundred gentlemen without salary took charge of the Vatican, but they were promoted to the honours of knighthood which still preserved some of its pristine dignity: the calm was brief, and like his native Vesuvius he soon burst forth into terrible eruption *!

Such was the state of Rome and public expectations from the papacy when Siena fell and Cosimo's legions took possession of a solitude, for it is said that scarcely six out of forty thousand inhabitants remained! This is probably exaggerated; but when the people were disarmed and the government established, emigration increased so alarmingly that in order to arrest its progress the article of capitulation relating to that subject was broken and quitting the city made penal. The Spanish garrison under Count Sforza of Santa Fiore were at first restrained by a rigorous discipline and gave no offence to the people; Cosimo also took care to supply the latter with food in such abundance that the market price was scarcely a remuneration for the cost of carriage†, but after endeavouring to soften public feeling by this relief he appointed a Balìa of those citizens most inimical to French interests and devoted to the emperor, and with their aid disarmed the inhabitants. This was a death-blow to the unfortunate citizens who thus beheld every shadow of liberty fade away notwithstanding all the efforts that they had hitherto made to retain it. The decree was enforced with great rigour and in despite of Santa Fiore's efforts his soldiers' deportment became gradually more inso-

* Muratori, Anno 1555. — Platina, "Vite," pp. 555-9. — Adriani, Lib. xiii., pp. 890 to 892. — Rapin, Hist. d'Angleterre, vol. vi., Lib. xvi., pp. 124-128. — It was Paul IV. who re-admitted England into the bosom of

the church and erected Ireland into a kingdom, Henry the Eighth's act of 1542 being considered as invalid and heretical.

† Galluzzi, Lib. ii., cap. v., p. 92. — Adriani, Lib. xii., p. 868.

lent so that whoever had the means emigrated to Montalcino, Orvieto, Rome and other places; yet few went to the first through fear of being declared rebels*.

After the fall of Siena the war languished and soon after expired in Tuscany: Port Ercole, Castiglione della Pescaia, and Talamone, three sea-port towns, surrendered successively to Marignano: Piero Strozzi defended the first in person, but finding it impossible to hold out and knowing his fate if made prisoner, he escaped into the papal territory; Ottobuono de' Fieschi brother of the Genoese conspirator was captured and delivered to Andrea Doria who ordered him to be either torn asunder by four galleys, or sewed up in a sack and cast into the sea! perhaps both: it was a sacrifice not uncommon in that day, and made to the manes of Giannettino Doria nephew of Andrea, who had fallen in putting down the Fieschi conspiracy! This celebrated chief might have added more lustre to his declining years by pardoning the prisoner than committing such a crime, unjustifiable in a man like him even by the barbarous customs of that vindictive age! The great Andrea Doria though nurtured in the midst of war and revolutions, faction and civil strife, being then on the brink of eternity would perhaps have done better had he considered that "*revenge only adds crime to misfortune*" †.

The discontent of Siena and her secret but constant communication with Montalcino did not remain unnoticed but on the contrary brought down coercion, banishment, and confiscation of property upon the citizens; even the Balìa was rather the enemy of France from private and personal injuries than attached either to duke or emperor and held an uncertain course between them and their own exiled countrymen. Endeavours were made to induce a reunion of the Montalcinese republic with

* Cini, Vita, Lib. v., p. 336.—Adriani, — Galluzzi, Lib. ii°, cap. v.—Cini, Lib. xiii., pp. 869-903. Vita, Lib. v., p. 344.

† Adriani, Lib. xiii., pp. 883 and 918.

Siena but without effect, and the exiles in defiance of every compact were declared rebels. This severity seems however to have been partially justified by the conduct of Montalcino itself; for assuming the name, forms, and authority of the old republic and being composed of its most illustrious citizens the Senese were publicly invited to join it, and whoever remained in Siena was held to be a disaffected man, false to his country, unmindful of its dignity, and finally declared a rebel. Cosimo retaliated; both governments cited the severed portion to reunite, and rebellion and confiscation of property were declared on either side: it was impossible to live quietly for between fear and inclination the perplexity had become both dangerous and distressing, and emigration to neutral states continued thinning the miserable population until Siena like the surrounding country became almost a desert*.

After the capture of Port Ercole the Marquis of Marignano's declining health compelled him to resign all military command, and most of the imperial troops having been about the same time recalled by the Duke of Alva Charles's Lieutenant in Lombardy, the war dwindled into a system of mere depredation until the Turkish fleet reappeared and put the whole coast into a state of alarm without any decided result. This however encouraged Montalcino to assemble troops under the French general Monsieur de Soubise who had succeeded Strozzi and to make a petty diversion in the Val-di-Chiana: whereupon Cosimo, feeling unable to act vigorously in the field, induced the Senese government between menace and persuasion to acknowledge by a solemn act of authority the feudal lordship of Charles and Philip over their country. By this service and the assistance of Don Francisco de Toledo he so far pleased the court as to procure a reënfacement of troops and was thus enabled to show a better front to the enemy†. The Florentine

* Cini, Vita, Lib. v., p. 337.

† Galluzzi, Lib. ii°, cap. v., p. 102, &c.—Adriani, Lib. xiii., pp. 883-913.

exiles at Rome although somewhat discouraged and weakened by misfortune were reanimated by the favour of Caraffa: Paul had in fact appointed a Florentine rebel as his secretary, one who by his abusive writings had rendered himself singularly obnoxious to Cosimo; he showed especial favour to the Archbishop Altoviti of Florence whose revenues Cosimo had sequestered; Cardinal Caraffa and Piero Strozzi were bosom friends; the Spaniards were detested by Paul who openly protected the rebels and exiles of that nation and Florence, wherefore the latter were elated with new hopes and reviving visions of liberty. Their extreme excitement made them tear down Cosimo's arms from the national church at Rome and substitute the ancient republican cognizance of the Lion or "*Marzocco*" with the legend "*Senatus Populusque Florentinus*," a proceeding which though it could not in common decency be sanctioned by any friendly government still showed their confidence in papal support. Giovan Francesco Giugni the chief actor in this insulting freak was soon murdered, as the exiles asserted, by orders from Cosimo through his minister, for the assassin received shelter and protection from the imperial ambassador: this rendered the position of the envoy so dangerous that he was withdrawn and the Duke fearful of a new war in Tuscany through French influence at the papal court, endeavoured by every sort of conciliation to keep the Caraffa quiet, therefore flattered Paul's vanity by an extraordinary and magnificent embassy*.

But all the cunning and adulation of Cosimo failed to soothe that ambitious priest who had cast a longing eye on Siena as a principality for his family, the value of such an acquisition being greatly enhanced in Paul's mind by the pleasure of wresting it from the hands of Charles whom he detested, especially for opposing his election to the papacy. Under pretence of curbing the ecclesiastical rebels a levy of troops was effected in Rome while secret negotiations were carried on with France, and the

* Galluzzi, Lib. ii., cap. v., p. 106.

expulsion of Charles V. from Naples was held out as a bait by that court to secure Paul's coöperation in the Tuscan war. The consequence of all this was a treaty signed in December by which Henry II. engaged to defend the pontiff with twelve thousand infantry and five hundred horse while the latter promised to contribute ten thousand foot and a thousand horsemen to the army of Tuscany or Naples at his option. Henry's second son was to have the crown of Naples, but with the territory diminished by a portion to be annexed to the church, and another erected into a principality for the Caraffa family. All three were to be held as ecclesiastical fiefs and the treaty was to remain secret until a Turkish fleet could coöperate on the coast of Naples: Piero Strozzi and the Pope's nephews were the most active movers in this curious business, where the high priest of Christendom, the founder of the rigid order of "*Teatini*," the most zealous advocate of the Inquisition, and one of the direst scourges of heresy, became not only a disturber of public tranquillity and virulent exciter of war, but a sworn ally of the infidels whom he welcomed into the heart of Italy; and all for the purpose of exalting his own family to the rank of petty princes*!

The Duke of Ferrara was appointed general of this League and Piero Strozzi lent his aid to organize the military preparations of the Caraffa; but Venice was in vain solicited to join, and in the following February a truce of five years
A.D. 1556. between France and Spain, concluded without reference to the Pope, left him so open to Spanish hostility, that he bent all his endeavours to render it useless. Philip II. was not at this moment inclined to war, for though Charles V. worn out with bodily suffering had abdicated the sovereignty of Flanders in his favour on the twenty-fifth of October 1555 that country was exhausted and too weak to maintain itself singly against so powerful a neighbour as France,

* Platina, Vite, p. 559.—Galluzzi, Lib. iiº, cap. v., p. 111.—Adriani, Lib. xiv., p. 946.—Muratori, Annali.

wherefore Philip demanded Spain also or threatened to resign Flanders. Charles ceded and retired to the convent of San Justo in February 1557 but kept the imperial crown until the following September. Philip thus free, at once entered into negotiations with France and by the management of Montmorency who deprecated all Italian warfare and disliked the alliance with Paul, the above-named truce of Cambray was concluded for five years but with the intention on Philip's part that it should only last for three *.

Cosimo was far from content with this truce, because Paul III. having invested Piero Strozzi with the chief military command he foresaw nothing but suspicion and anxiety, the cost of war without its advantages. The Duke of Alva aware of Paul's hostile intentions passed through Florence on his way to assume the viceroyalty of Naples and oppose them: he and Cosimo were congenial spirits; able, cunning, cruel and unscrupulous; but King Philip added bigotry to these qualities, and educated in profound veneration for papal authority dreaded the idea of open warfare against the church. With considerable difficulty and on the plea of self-preservation Cosimo and Alva overcame his scruples and in their interview at Florence the former's powerful mind and thorough knowledge of Italian politics were made use of by Alva in arranging the plan of campaign, Cosimo for his own safety resolving to remain neuter. He feared the papal force directed by so deadly an enemy as Strozzi who had, says Galluzzi, just been organizing a conspiracy at Rome to poison Cosimo and all his sons through the means of an attendant to whose son a bishopric was promised, and ten thousand ducats were deposited for the expense of the plot †. Other machinations for the surprise of Cortona and Montepulciano that were likewise discovered, besides infor-

* Galluzzi, Lib. ii., cap. v.

† Galluzzi, Lib. ii., cap. vi., p. 129.

— But according to Cini (*Vita di Cosimo*), the Duke always spoke of

him as "*a fair and open enemy*."

Assassination was unsuited to his character, though sanctioned by the spirit of the age.

mation of some which had no existence rendered Cosimo extremely suspicious, and interrupted all intercourse between Rome and Florence. The Senese government also dreading to fall under his rule exerted themselves to embroil him with the Cardinal of Burgos Philip II.'s governor, by which they hoped to alarm that monarch about the Duke's ambitious designs on Siena, and Burgos was delighted to second them because the longer Cosimo could be staved off the longer that cardinal's government would continue. All this weakened the Duke of Florence, paralysed his intended efforts against the remaining French garrisons, and inclined him for the moment to neutrality. Besides which his dominions were too much exhausted and Philip not being able to repay the enormous debt that Charles V. had contracted offered Cosimo large possessions and a share in the mines of America as a compensation; but he had deeper views, and for the moment ceased remonstrating and maintained his neutrality, at least according to his own manner, which was to afford Alva every assistance short of overt acts while he negotiated with Pope Paul for peace. Philip left the conduct of this war entirely to him and that minister, who finding that a body of Gascons had already landed at Civitavecchia and that Strozzi was hourly expected with more troops from France immediately marched twelve thousand men into the papal states, took Ostia and Tivoli and alarmed Paul so much that a truce was concluded in November for forty days which allowed both parties time for preparation. On the side of France Guise was ordered with twelve thousand men to assemble at Turin, and marching by Ferrara and Romagna to form a junction with the papal forces at Rome
 A.D. 1557. he arrived in January 1557 just after the truce expired and when Strozzi had already commenced hostilities by the siege and recapture of Ostia*.

* Galluzzi, *Lib. ii.*, cap. vi., pp. 122-125.—Cini, *Vita di Cosimo*, *Lib. vi.*, p. 395, &c.

During this time Ottaviano Farnese principally through Cosimo's management had made friends with Philip on the restoration of Placentia while the Duke himself negotiated with both Rome and France the better to compel Philip to an immediate liquidation of his debts or the cession of Siena instead. Through his brother-in-law Don Louis de Toledo Cosimo intimated to King Philip that he could wait no longer for the repayment of his loans; that he had flattering offers from Henry, amongst others the marriage of their children, and that unless Philip took some decided part he should be compelled to join that side, the cardinal's hand being too feeble to retain Siena for a moment after the first burst of war. A change was therefore indispensable either by a stronger government or by conferring the absolute sovereignty of Siena on him for self-preservation until fully repaid for his vast expenses in the Spanish cause*, and in conclusion he asserted that the condition of Italy and his own position were so precarious that an immediate decision became necessary. This bold peremptory language displeased and startled the Spanish cabinet which however preferred to make Cosimo a useful adherent rather than an able opponent, for he could at any moment have seized on Siena the greater part of her strongholds being already in his power.

Don Juan de Figueroa governor of Milan repaired to Florence for the settlement of this question in March 1557, with proposals so restrictive and even humiliating that Cosimo at once rejected them and in returning thanks for the gracious expression of Philip's wishes added, "That although a poor and small prince he could better afford to make him a present of the debt than consent to repayment on such conditions." Don Juan however was not baffled, and the Duke thinking it better to have Siena on any tolerable conditions than to lose the

* The Spanish debt due to Cosimo amounted to about 2,000,000 of ducats.

present opportunity, abated his demands and consented to restore Piombino to its prince who was then a supplicant in London. Louis de Toledo was again employed and in June obtained the king's ratification of what Figueroa and the Duke had agreed on, so that a compact was made at Florence early in July by which the state and city of Siena were given to Cosimo as a fief of the Spanish crown with the reservation of Orbitello, Telamone, Port Ercole, San Stefano, and the whole peninsula of Monte Argentario on which the two latter were situated. Piombino, and Elba with the exception of Porto Ferraio and a district of two miles radius, were to be restored to Philip; other conditions related to mutual protection besides a secret article binding Cosimo to Philip's approval of his children's marriages. Spain was released from all debts due to Florence, and the Prince of Piombino from any claims of the same nature contracted for the operations of war; the Spaniard was to aid his new vassal in the recovery of all the Senese towns still held by France, and thus the destiny of Siena was irrevocably settled and every shadow of future liberty obliterated.

Cosimo's representative Don Louis de Toledo received possession of that city from Juan de Figueroa on the nineteenth of July 1557 in despite of the Cardinal of Burgos who had all along been indefatigable in his endeavours to prevent the cession. The Senese were at once plunged into deep and hopeless affliction; Montalcino was in terror and despair, nobody was pleased, not even the Balia chosen by Cosimo himself, so generally was he detested. Yet the engine of his power rolled steadily forward, moved by innate cunning, aided by kings, crushing a whole people, and breaking through every obstacle.

All the native authorities took an oath of allegiance; Federico di Montauto assumed the military command; Chiappino Vitelli relieved the Spanish guard; and the wretched citizens endeavoured to mask their anguish by sending a deputation to

Cosimo expressive of the universal delight at becoming his subjects! There was at least one good cause for rejoicing: Siena was delivered from the insolence of an unpaid, licentious, and even mutinous soldiery, and the territory relieved from hostile excursions which kept it in a state of unmitigated woe. For three long and bloody years had the inhabitants been unable to till the deserted soil, live in their villas, or even pay them a momentary visit without danger; but the instant that Monluc, who had succeeded Soubise, became aware of this transfer all hostility ceased, Cosimo's neutrality was strictly respected, and peace, the peace of desolation, spread its deep shadow over the afflicted land*.

Cosimo's earliest care was to ameliorate the condition of his new subjects and restore the lost population, not from any unusual touch of humanity but because self-interest now suggested attention to his own property and the improvement of revenue: he therefore abolished the Gabelle and by proclamation allowed all declared rebels to return under the safe-guard of a general amnesty by which every political crime was buried and every estate restored. A captain of justice from Arezzo was called to preside over the tribunals; the laws were administered with more rigour, and between private persons probably with more impartiality than the factious citizens had ever before experienced. The appointment of "Captain of the People" or chief magistrate of Siena Cosimo reserved for himself, but the Seignory and all other magistracies were continued in the old republican form without alteration. A rigorous search was nevertheless made for arms and every precaution taken against disturbance: in common with other subject cities the privilege was conceded to Siena of choosing a certain number of people on whom were conferred the freedom of Florence with all its rights of citizenship. Montalcino, Grosseto, Montepescale,

* Cini, Vita, Lib. vi., pp. 399-413.— p. 131, and cap. vii. p. 147.—Monluc, Adriani, Lib. xiv., pp. 994 and 1012 Lib. iv., pp. 286-308. to 1015.—Galluzzi, Lib. ii°, cap. vi°,

Chiusi, Radicofani and some other places were, under the republic of Montalcino, still garrisoned by Frenchmen and the truce reciprocally observed; Orbitello and Port Ercole being the only disturbed points, and even they were little troubled; so that Tuscany was now comparatively peaceful, but abroad war and desolation reappeared in full vigour.

The Duke of Guise having already broken the truce by attacking Valenza entered Piedmont and afterwards joining the Duke of Ferrara at Reggio he concerted the plan of campaign with him and Caraffa, proceeding to Rome as already related while the port of Ancona was preparing for the disembarkation of a large Turkish army from Constantinople*.

Cosimo was admired by all Italy for the dexterity with which he acquired a once powerful state the ancient rival of his own; and this admiration was in unison with the spirit of an unscrupulous age in which success was always considered a justification of the means, however abominable! An age in which Macchiavelli boldly exhibited what men actually did, and what princes were daily doing, and yet is accused of *teaching* them; of teaching those whose actions had taught *him* to reason and calmly discuss their sagacity, policy, and fitness for the proposed end; but not their justice or morality†.

The connection of a petty but independent state by feudal ties with a powerful monarchy which necessarily dragged the independent portion along with them, was at best a very doubtful good, and Florence paid dearly for the purchase, a purchase of mere weakness as will hereafter be seen: but Philip II. was blamed for this act, done as it appears in opposition to his ministers'

* Cini, Vita di Cosimo, Lib. vi., p. 395.—Galluzzi, Lib. vi., cap. vi., p. 132.—Adriani, Lib. xiv., p. 1015, and Lib. xv., pp. 1016-18.

† The variety and opposition of opinions on Macchiavelli's real views in writing the "*Prince*" are so great, and the different meanings attached to

some of the most startling passages by calm unprejudiced people are so discrepant as to render any defence of him hopeless; wherefore here and elsewhere the author merely expresses his own sentiments without condemning those of the majority.

advice; yet he probably acted wisely in exchanging a ruined discontented and costly province for a firm and able adherent whose personal character and territorial power made him a valuable friend or a formidable foe: nor was there less prudence in liquidating an enormous debt which Spain was then unable to pay; nor in throwing the expense together with the odium of holding this province on a dependent prince whom he effectually controlled by the retention of five seaports all well fortified and garrisoned and opening so many doors into Tuscany; and finally in thus commanding the resources not only of his vassal Lord of Siena but through him of the independent Duke of Florence. Cosimo was also already in possession of the Valdichiana, Casole, Massa da Marittima, Piombino and Elba, while all the revenue of that part which Philip relinquished scarcely amounted to 50,000 ducats*! His dominions now became incorporated as it were with the Spanish monarchy by the obligation of assistance in time of war, but the restriction of his sovereign and parental authority left the Duke in reality very little superior to a grandee of Spain, and the maritime province composed of the four seaports thus retained† completely bridled him and his successors while it remained separated, which it long did under the name of "*Presidj*," from the garrisons which were constantly maintained there by the Spanish and Neapolitan monarchs.

Proceeding on the plan settled at Reggio Guise had already penetrated the Abruzzi and besieged Civitella di Fronto near Ascoli, a strong frontier town in the kingdom of Naples which was relieved by Alva with an army of sixteen thousand men: Piero Strozzi opposed Colonna in the Roman Campagna, and the Duke of Ferrara endeavoured to harass Milan while he coöperated with Brissac in Piedmont. A misunderstanding soon took place between Guise and the Caraffas which Strozzi endea-

* Galluzzi, Lib. ii., cap. vi.

reckoned one of the "*Presidj*" or

† Piombino although retained was not "*garrisons*."

voured to clear up; but on the Duke's at last threatening to withdraw his army altogether from the south and join Brissac Pope Paul despatched Strozzi to France with his kinsman the Duke of Palliano both as a hostage for the Caraffa race, and to show the impossibility of success if the troops withdrew before every place captured by Alba were recovered. Meanwhile Paul prepared for the worst by commencing a negotiation through Cosimo for peace with Spain, and Cosimo by seconding these overtures induced Philip to intrust him with the business. Having had subsequent intelligence however that Marshal Strozzi was already returning with money and orders for Guise to assist Paul in recovering his territory and then to invade Tuscany, the Duke saw that it was time to break his neutrality and assume the offensive, especially as he now discovered that the late quarrel was merely a trick of the French to occupy Civita Vecchia and Ancona. He therefore lost no time in augmenting his army and aided by the Duke of Alva and Doria's galleys proposed to occupy Civita Vecchia and possess himself of all the coast to the Tiber's mouth: neither did he lose the occasion of attempting to intercept Strozzi, but the latter was too wary to be thus taken and carried the royal orders safe to Rome.

Hearing however that the French were raising a large force in Switzerland and that the Lyonesse Florentines had subscribed largely to the Tuscan war, Cosimo deemed it expedient to change his proposed descent on the Roman coast into an effort to conciliate Paul and if possible seduce him from the side of France. In this he was favoured by Alva's advance up to the very gates of Rome while Guise was occupied at Palliano then besieged by the Colonna, and also by intelligence of the battle of Saint Quintin which laid France open to the victorious Spaniards. The instantaneous recall of the Swiss who were already on their march, and the return of Guise and Strozzi to France with all their troops were some of the consequences of this

disaster; and Strozzi who had hitherto advocated war now joined the Venetian ambassador and others in urging Paul to bend for a while under the blast and make peace with Spain*. Cosimo on the other hand sent Averardo de' Medici to soften his papal pride if it were possible and afterwards inform Alva that unless he intended to destroy Pope Paul altogether he should separate him from France and thus employ the Neapolitan army without danger in Tuscany†.

The Duke of Alva ceding to this advice concluded a treaty on the twelfth of September 1557 at Cavi in which, after a feeble attempt to save them, the Colonna were sacrificed to papal vengeance and the Duke of Ferrara left open to that of Spain; and this soon showed itself through Ottaviano Farnese in a war to which Cosimo was summoned to contribute. But having had some overtures from Ferrara about a family union, besides the danger of diminishing his force with a French army in Tuscany; perhaps unwilling to increase Philip's power, or ruin the Duke of Ferrara, he gave only slender aid and reëstablished peace in April 1558 by inducing Ferrara to renounce France and become reconciled to the Farnese.

Tranquillity was now in some degree restored, but the public and private calamities of prince and people, augmented the disastrous effects of war pestilence and famine: after two days of violent and unceasing rain the mountain torrents of the Mugello and Casentino carried such floods to the Sieve and Arno as soon turned them into mighty rivers, and both rushing impetuously from different quarters on the Ponte-a-Sieve united there and rolled heavily down on the capital. The Ponte-alle-Grazie first felt this shock and was cleared of every house down to its naked arches; the parapet walls connecting it with Ponte Vecchio were swept off; the latter stood; but the Trinità crushed to a thousand fragments sunk in the angry tide

* Galluzzi, *Lib. ii.*, cap. vii., pp. 147-151.—Adriani, *Lib. xv.*, pp. 1031-1033.

† Adriani, *Lib. xv.*, p. 1036.—Galluzzi, *Lib. ii.*, cap. vii.

and in sinking checked its sweep and overwhelmed the city; even with diminished force it carried away two whole arches of the Ponte-alla-Carraia from their very foundations, and then rolled wildly on to Pisa. Florence became in a few minutes one vast mass of water, mud, and ruin: the gate of La Croce burst inwards with a dreadful crash and the lower parts of the city were deluged in some places to the depth of two-and-twenty feet by this fearful element: the baptistry was flooded, all except the altar which floated like the ark, as it were in sacred custody, the object of hope and veneration! It was a fearful visitation: no less than six inches of water flooded the cathedral's pavement high as it stands on its marble basement! the grand ducal square became a deep lake; its buildings like Venetian palaces rising proudly from the wave; its arched and fretted portico seemed like a sea-god's dwelling; there was beauty in the scene, but mingled with all the terrible sublimity of nature's violence: few lives were lost because a long-continued rain gave warning of the blow; but fear, ruin, and destruction of property; filth, starvation, and consequent pestilence filled up the measure of misfortune after the flood itself had subsided! Every mill had been swept away and no remedy remained until provisions were with difficulty collected from the rural districts, themselves equally miserable*.

Such visitations are fearful and their immediate effects distressing but seldom lasting: moral evils are of a different character, often more shocking and always more permanently mischievous. Of these the tale of Maria de' Medici's death furnishes a melancholy instance, if its authenticity may be fully relied on: the following story is told in the "*Origine e Descendenza della Casa de' Medici*" a manuscript work of an old date which in its general historical notices of that family seems worthy of confidence.

* Cini, Vita, Lib. vi., p. 415.—Mura- 1039.—Galluzzi, Lib. ii°, cap. vii.,
tori, Annali.—Adriani, Lib. xv., p. 157.

: Maria, Cosimo's eldest daughter who was at one time intended for the Prince of Este died on the twentieth of November 1557 according to Galluzzi, (who discredits the whole tale) after twelve days of acute fever but with strong rumours of some secret amour and the consequent administration of poison by her own father*. Maria was both beautiful and virtuous, but not being exempt from human passions she and a young page of the Duke's household, son of Malatesta Lord of Rimini, fell in love with each other. It so happened that an old Spaniard named *Mandriano* who was frequently on guard at the door of the duchess's apartments seeing the young lovers walking together with their arms round each other's neck instantly made his report to Eleonora, and she no less promptly to the Duke. Without hesitation he ordered slow poison to be administered to his daughter on which says the manuscript she fell ill and died in about a month. The page was placed in the most rigorous confinement where he remained for twelve years until his father came to supplicate Cosimo for his liberty. In consequence of his extreme youth when the crime was committed, besides other excuses, the father had permission to remain eight or ten days with every facility for seeing and conversing with his son. He then took leave, advising patience under a misfortune which seemed inevitable, but promising to use every effort in his favour. Repairing to the palace he had a short conversation with Cosimo and was turning to depart when the Duke perceiving that he had not boldness enough to allege any further excuses said, "Now, although he deserves no mercy yet I will send him to the lower fortress as a prisoner at large." Malatesta departed and the young captive soon became intimate with one of the officers through whose means he escaped and joined his father then commanding the Venetian army in Candia. Cosimo's first act was to hang the officer; "whose head," says the manuscript, "may be seen to this day placed in an iron

* Galluzzi, Lib. ii°, cap. vii., pp. 158-159.

cage on the walls of the fortress:" his next, for Cosimo's assassins were like his spies, ubiquitary; was to have his victim murdered in Candia, and he succeeded, but Jacopo Malatesta killed the murderer; a poor exchange for the life of an injured child*.

Child-murder, there is some reason to believe was one of Cosimo de' Medici's sins as will be seen hereafter; but if ever committed it was in a paroxysm of fury provoked by fratricide: what has been above related touching Maria de' Medici although not out of keeping with his violent implacable character and naturally cruel disposition, is extremely improbable and a story not unlikely to have been generated by the deep detestation in which he was held, coupled with the general belief in his capability of such a deed. Nor is it likely that Cosimo should have treated the audacious page who presumed to raise his eyes to a daughter of the Medici with less rigour than that daughter whose life he is said to have sacrificed†.

The Duke now became desirous of effecting a close family union between Tuscany and Ferrara, in order to curb papal ambition and resist any aggressions on the part of Milan or A.D. 1558. Naples, and also to make it strong enough to withstand the wilful mandates of transalpine monarchs: they could then be narrowly watched and their objects ascertained, and by prompt succours and reciprocal communication between Florence and Ferrara so baffled as to enable these states to stand firm against the passions of France and Spain and only act for the universal benefit of Italy‡.

After the fall of Siena the rule of Henry II. over what remained of her territory was purely military, and with the empty name of liberty the people were as much slaves to the French

* Origine e Descendenza de' Medici, fol. 266, MS.

† It is curious however that Cini (*Vita di Cosimo*, Lib. vi., p. 420) barely mentions Maria de' Medici's death; and in all cases tending to Cosimo's

discredit, he slurs over the circumstances as rapidly as possible.

‡ Cini, *Vita*, Lib. vi., pp. 419-20.—Adriani, Lib. xv., p. 1061.—Galluzzi, Lib. ii^o, cap. vii., pp. 187-9.

as they had been to the Spaniards. The strongholds were valuable in an enemy's country, and as garrisons alone were they held without any regard to the inhabitants who were heavily taxed for their support : it was the mere mockery of a state, without strength or spirit, therefore when deprived by France of all financial administration and when the government was transferred from Montalcino to Grosseto in 1557, the citizens succumbed without a word, hoping by this implicit obedience to preserve the friendship of Henry who cared little what became of them apart from his own views and interests. Monluc, a rough soldier devoted to his master's service acted as he was bid and though personally humane and honourable became little scrupulous about the preservation of a mock independence or the exaction of supplies for his forts and garrisons. He treated the state as a besieged town ; commanded all those to leave the country who had not eight months' provisions in store, and established a vexatious perquisition with orders to seize any overplus for the public service. This was however all done in the name of the people yet the consequence was an increase in the Senese population, but other emigrants expatriated themselves altogether, many were driven to the highway, and bands of unpaid French soldiers plundered the remaining inhabitants*. Though compelled by necessity Monluc appears to have been a person naturally averse to such doings and finally requested his recall : Don Francesco d'Este brother of Hercules Duke of Ferrara was destined to succeed him, but Henry II. tired with the expense of Tuscany would have given the places he held there to that duke for the discharge of a debt amounting to 500,000 ducats. For this sum Hercules tendered them to Cosimo, who offered 350,000, feeling that he was strong enough to drive the French from Tuscany in three months if Philip II. would only assist him. That king however being lukewarm about Italian affairs, Cosimo maintained the

* Cini, Vita, Lib. vi., p. 418.—Galluzzi, Lib. ii^o, cap. vii., p. 181.

truce while petty hostilities between the French and Spanish garrisons were continually fretting the country *.

Italian wars having thus nearly expired all eyes were turned on Flanders where the Duke of Guise commanded : well seconded by the sagacity and daring conduct of Piero Strozzi he had surprised and captured Calais when it had been more than two centuries in possession of the English, an exploit considered as a counterpoise for the defeat of Saint Quintin, and the subsequent surrender of Thionville raised the spirits of France which misfortunes had previously depressed. Before the latter town Piero Strozzi after a life of misfortune, incessant activity, and danger, finally met his death on the twenty-first of June 1558 while reconnoitring with the Duke of Guise, by whom as well as by the whole court and army, in despite of their jealousy of Italians, he was esteemed and regretted, and by none more than the Duke of Guise himself and the veteran Monluc. From the latter his death was a while concealed lest it should unman him for the following day's assault, and Henry on receiving the intelligence went into mourning with all his court†. Thus without an additional crime was Cosimo delivered from his deadliest foe, and if Galluzzi speaks true one not less unscrupulous than himself ; but Strozzi appears to have been too frank and fearless to employ secret assassins against any man, although in an age and country where such deeds were rife, tolerated, and even approved ; unless indeed he were compelled by the right of self-preservation. Such conduct was foreign to his character and scarcely compatible with his great popularity amongst the French who were certainly not assassins : wherefore we must believe even if Galluzzi, who gives no proof of the fact, be correct, that he was driven to this in self-defence against Cosimo's machinations of which the testimony is undoubted and existing. Public congratulations were offered to the latter on this deliverance from

* Cini, Vita, Lib. vi., p. 419.—Monluc, Lib. iv., p. 323.—Galluzzi, Lib. ii°, cap. vii., p. 182.

† Monluc, Lib. iv., p. 341.—Adriani, Lib. xv., p. 1070.

an enemy whose hatred, the desire of liberating his country, and vengeance for a father's death, had made a willing agent in all Italian wars which promised to injure the Duke of Florence. The princes whom he served were well aware that against Cosimo he would show unmitigated hate and unrelaxing vigour; his whole life public and private was spent either in counteracting that Duke's secret designs or opposing him openly in the field; and he was moreover become one of the most sagacious and experienced generals of the age, coupled with such enterprise and so utter a contempt of danger as rendered him if not a captain of the highest genius at least a most valuable officer.

Paul IV. was almost wholly guided by him in the war against Naples, and having been previously delighted with his piety in ordering a strict observance of Lent during the Senese war, bestowed a cardinal's hat on his brother the Bishop of Beziers. Piero Strozzi seems to have been endowed with considerable generosity and even greatness of mind; with much foresight, resolution, and boldness of character: he knew the world, was learned in antiquity, skilled in all the physical and intellectual accomplishments of the day; was eloquent, liberal, a good military engineer*; and had the art of accommodating himself so easily to French manners that in despite of the excessive national jealousy which prevailed at court no Italian was ever so generally esteemed there. Nevertheless so unpopular was that nation that at one time he was about to retire in disgust, nay was actually in treaty with Philip II., who offered him the principality of Roffano with large military appointments and the supreme command of all the Italian infantry, if he would recon-

* Strozzi was considered as a master in the military architecture of that day, an architecture differing little from the present, as may be seen in the fortresses of Florence, Siena, Port Ercole, and Porto Ferrajo; all (except the Florentine citadel) constructed by Giovanni Camerini, the Duke's chief

engineer, to whom Philip II. gave the charge of fortifying Port Ercole. It was by him also that the beautiful fort on Monte Filippo in the Maremma was built, and it still remains a pleasing specimen of military architecture, the site having been chosen by Chiappino Vitelli.

cile himself with Cosimo and enter the Spanish service. The Caraffi having some intimation of this, became alarmed and informed Henry II., who with the queen immediately wrote letters so kind and encouraging as to make him abandon the whole negotiation and re-attach himself with all his early feelings to the court of France. Cosimo, says Cini, although liberated from a perpetual anxiety and dangerous enemy in Piero Strozzi yet never showed any sign of rejoicing nor spoke of him but with honour; on the contrary both before and afterwards he affirmed that he had nothing to complain of, for *Piero had ever acted openly against him* * and Italy had lost in him one of her principal gentlemen †.

The Duke of Alva having quitted Italy the management of Spanish interests devolved entirely on Cosimo; and by virtue of this power he concluded the treaty with Ferrara which thus interposed a strong barrier from sea to sea between the north and south, well adapted, if wisely used, to strengthen national independence and curb the ambition of every succeeding pontiff ‡. Paul IV. and his family became discontented with Philip for not having as they said fulfilled the truce of Cavi, but occasioned fresh movements in the papal dominions and more vigilance on Cosimo's part who by the aid of a Spanish force on its way to Naples re-captured Talamone, and Castiglione della Pescaia with considerable annoyance to Grosseto, a breach of the truce in retaliation for certain depredations committed on his territory by Don Francesco d'Este who ruled Montalcino with great unpopularity. The French had been defeated at Gravelines by Count Egmont who with Savoy became superior in the field and overawed the only army that Henry could oppose to them for the protection of France. Both parties were tired,

* "*Con la visiera aperta*," with his visor open, were Cosimo's words, says Cini.

† Vita di Piero Strozzi, MS., in author's possession.—Galluzzi, Lib. ii.,

cap. viii., p. 191.—Adriani, Lib. xv., p. 1070.—Cini, Vita, Lib. vi., pp. 385 and 421.

‡ Adriani, Lib. xv., p. 1061.

their resources gone, and the war had ever been unpopular in England where the loss of Calais discontented everybody and hastened Queen Mary's death: moreover neither belligerent was willing to risk national safety on the result of a single battle wherefore both became willing to treat, and France opened the negotiations. The death of Charles V. which occurred in September hastened them because Philip was anxious to hurry into Spain, and a truce took place in October which continued through the month of January 1559, but permanent peace was retarded by Queen Mary's death on the seventeenth of November for none yet knew the politics of Elizabeth who was courted by both parties: nevertheless a treaty was signed at Chateau Cambresis in Picardy on the third of April 1559*.

Cosimo with great difficulty but greater dexterity profited largely by this peace in the acquisition of all the French parts of the Senese dominion, for which however he had to wind his way through the conflicting pretensions of three different competitors. Paul IV. and the Caraffi demanded them as the reward of their fidelity to the French cause, but the pontiff was now become too old and infirm to possess much weight in the negotiations. Hercules Duke of Ferrara demanded them in liquidation of the debt due to him from Henry II. but refused them as a feudal tenure. His brother Francesco the actual governor, offered to take them on any terms and hastened to court the better to prosecute his object; but Cosimo's diplomacy proved too searching and successful for all, and the whole state and republic of Montalcino was abandoned by the French monarch to his rule. The death of Henry II. in a tournament, and the Duke of Ferrara's intrigues to gain possession of this territory, for a while retarded the cession, but finally the conditions were fulfilled and the month of July saw Cosimo Lord of the whole Republic of Siena except the "*Presidij*." The unfortunate Montalcinese

* Muratori, Annali.—Adriani, Lib. xv., pp. 1077-1086, 1097.

begged hard for independence and at first imagined it was secured; they entreated to have any master sooner than the dreaded and detested Cosimo; the Pope, King Philip, the Duke of Ferrara were all tried without success, wherefore having no friends, no resources, no hopes, they submitted with a good grace to their inevitable destiny. Henry II. had repeatedly promised to leave them free, and the difficulty was how to keep this promise while he made them over to Cosimo; but as diplomatic immorality is never at fault, the Spanish deputies appointed to receive the dominion for Philip as lord paramount were informed that all the French garrisons would be withdrawn and Montalcino left free, after which they might if they pleased take possession of that city and its dependencies for the King of Spain. Henry II. also wrote to Bentivoglio who had been left in command there by Francesco d'Este, saying, "I am about to resign the protectorship of the Senese" and put them in possession of their ancient liberty and under "the jurisdiction of the magistracy to which they were accustomed in their city of Siena; in the doing of which they will be restored to all their possessions without any questions being asked or any imputations thrown upon their past conduct." This equivocal letter strengthened the general feeling that even Siena was to recover her ancient freedom and therefore elated the spirits of the Montalcinese only to be more cruelly depressed. The Duke of Ferrara however took advantage of it to delay the evacuation, and by means of Bentivoglio worked on the public mind so as to induce the Senate to offer him the lordship of that unhappy republic. Ambassadors were then sent to Paul IV. soliciting him to accept them, but all was now changed at Rome, where the Caraffi had been carrying on a secret intrigue and deceived their uncle who was first informed of it by Cosimo; the consequence was their banishment with an entire alteration of politics: every warlike notion now vanished from the pontiff's mind; the Duke of Florence became

a favourite; papal ambition expired; the administration changed hands, justice was better administered but too severely executed; oppression ceased, taxation diminished, and Paul IV. from having been a turbulent and unpopular pontiff surprised Rome and all Christendom by the change. His advice was that the Montalcinese should submit promptly to Cosimo and that those who counselled otherwise were not their friends: Cornelio Bentivoglio nevertheless continued his opposition and it was not until the arrival of a French squadron off the Ombrone to receive the troops that the evacuation was accomplished*.

When Don Juan de Guevara as Philip's representative and Niccolini as the deputy of Cosimo, approached Montalcino they were received in the first instance by a group of fifty children each carrying an olive branch and crying "*Pace*," "*Pace*;" "*Palle*," "*Palle*:" a band of civic militia consisting of two hundred young and well-armed citizens followed, these and the various republican magistracies received the deputies at the city gate and conducted them to the Senate where the republic formally submitted to Guevara: then in Philip's name he invested Niccolini with the lordship as the proxy of Cosimo whose garrison then marched in, and his concessions to the citizens were published. Their substance was a general amnesty and restoration of property according to treaty; an approval of all public acts of government during the period of Montalcinese independence, except the alienation of public revenue or possessions: all political crimes and offences against the Senese laws were pardoned: five years' grace were accorded for the payment of public debts due by private citizens before the war: all claims on the government of Siena due before April 1555 were admitted and the privileges of Montalcino confirmed. Thus all the ancient republic except the "*Presidij*;" and Sovana which the Count of Pitigliano refused to surrender; fell under Cosimo's jurisdiction; the absentees submitted either in person

* Platina, Vite, p. 563.—Cini, Vita, ii^o, cap. viii., pp. 200-217.—Adrian Lib. vi., pp. 425-433.—Galluzzi, Lib. Lib. xvi., pp. 1107 to 1121.

or by letter and those who returned were well received *. By treaty of Chateau Cambresis Cosimo was almost the only Italian potentate who really benefited and therefore became an object of jealousy: France surrendered more than a hundred-and-eighty fortified places, renounced all claims on Italy, and allowed Spain to establish herself in that country whose princes were now abjectly tied to her either by public treaty or private interest. Venice was fast waning and could oppose nothing to Philip; her only safety was now to be found in peace commerce and unpretending obscurity. The Pope, even with French assistance, had proved his weakness; the Romans still hated both him and his family for their tyranny, while Cosimo whose exaltation resulted from a steady and sagacious adherence to Austrian interests was always a vigilant guardian of his own and his master's welfare under the pretence of maintaining Italian tranquillity. Immediately after these events Pope Paul IV. died at Rome and the breath was hardly out of his body when tumults began, shouts arose for the Roman People, every street reëchoed with cries of "*Death to the Caraffi*:" the Inquisition was soon in flames and the pontiff's image hurled from its pedestal down the Capitoline staircase; nay to such a height did public fury attain that even the hawkers of glass bottles were fearful of calling as they were wont, "*Bicchiere*," "*Caraffe*" and therefore substituted "*Ampolle*" for the name of this detested family†. The head of Paul's statue was finally broken off and after having been for a while dragged and kicked about the streets was cast into the Tiber amidst the shouts and ridicule of an indignant people. Paul IV. died on the eighteenth of August, and on the twenty-fourth of December Giovan-Angelo de' Medici of Milan brother of the Marquis of Marignano ascended the papal throne principally

* Cini, Vita, Lib. viº, pp. 431-3. — Galluzzi, Lib. iiº, cap. viii., p. 215. — Adriani, Lib. xviº, pp. 1120-22.

† Galluzzi, Lib. iiiº, cap. iº, p. 264. —

Adriani, Lib. xviº, p. 1127. — Platina, Vite de' Papi. — Muratori, Annali. — Botta, Lib. x., p. 402.

through the Duke of Tuscany's influence under the name of Pius IV *. Cosimo's son-in-law Alphonso of Este succeeded to the dukedom of Ferrara in October, and his son Don Giovanni then only fourteen years of age was made a cardinal along with the celebrated San Carlo Borromeo nephew of Pius IV. The close intimacy between this pontiff and Cosimo enabled him to procure the pardon of several exiles, amongst them Cardinal Strozzi and his brother Robert, the only male survivors of that family except a son of Piero adopted by the Queen of France. Giuliano de' Medici brother of Lorenzino was also pardoned; he had followed the Strozzi and was real heir to the Florentine dukedom but had though a mere child fallen under the general sentence of his family: Cosimo nevertheless thought it prudent for the security of his own race to stop all future claims by making him an archbishop with a pension in lieu of his confiscated estates. On the other hand this prince procured the pardon of many Roman lords and extended his fame and influence so much that on a subsequent visit to the Pope he was received with honours similar to the most powerful monarchs †. While the cardinals were in conclave he detected a plot against himself which had long existed in a latent state but was not before this completely unravelled. Pandolfo Pucci, whose family since the elder Cosimo's day had been adherents of the Medici, were always favoured by the reigning Duke, and his licentiousness was overlooked or pardoned after much serious and friendly counsel. Notwithstanding such kindness Pucci and some others either from political or private and personal motives resolved to murder Cosimo and were encouraged to it by the King of France and Cardinal Farnese to whom that Duke had once given shelter from the persecution of Julius III. in 1551. The latter sent Pandolfo to Ottavio Duke of Parma for a supply of arms, and Cosimo was either to have been blown up with gunpowder, shot as he traversed the streets

* Muratori, *Annali*, 1559.† Galluzzi, *Lib. iii^o, cap. i^o*.

of Florence, or stabbed by Pucci in one of his more familiar moments at the palace.

Nevertheless it was by many supposed that Pucci never intended to kill the Duke, but only to establish his favour with the French party should Cosimo be dethroned which was at one time thought probable. Resolution seems finally to have been wanting and the victory of Marciano still more diminished it, so that the design was nearly relinquished when Cosimo suddenly arrested Pucci who after full confession was executed along with three others; several escaped and were declared rebels; amongst them Francesco Nasi who subsequently proved his innocence, nor was there any persecution or confiscation of property: Cosimo in this instance seems indeed to have abated something of his wonted cruelty and contented himself with simple deprivation of life for an already abandoned conspiracy, yet it must in candour be acknowledged that he was much provoked by the ingratitude of all parties*.

Although only the prince of a petty state this Duke was become from the force of his own great abilities one of the most influential sovereigns in Europe, and his views expanded with his exaltation. Disappointed of acquiring Lucca and compelled to exchange Piombino for the more splendid acquisition of Siena when he so earnestly coveted both, Tuscany became too confined a field, and plans for extending his dominion to Corsica were covertly laid on the same foundation that enabled him first to gain Piombino and then Siena, namely the expulsion of France from Tuscany and staving her off from all the Spanish possessions in Italy. Andrea Doria was superannuated and had lost his influence in Genoa; discord recommenced, and France had a powerful faction in that city which she determined to strengthen by getting possession of Bastia and ultimately occupying the whole island of Corsica.

* Cini, Lib. vii., pp. 437-442. — Galluzzi, Lib. iii., cap. i^o, pp. 267-269. — Adriani, Lib. xvi., pp. 1133 to 1135.

Cosimo aware of these designs endeavoured to arouse the Genoese to a full sense of their danger; he showed the inability of their garrisons to oppose such an enemy, the necessity of preserving what remaining property they held in that island for the maintenance of commerce and naval superiority by which alone they existed, finally proposing that their strongholds there should be given to Spain during the war, and if Philip refused this charge Cosimo offered not only to take it upon himself but to drive the French from that country. He also pressed these arguments and offers at the Spanish court, and what they would have led to had not peace intervened is hard to say; but every step of Cosimo was firm, sure, and judiciously planted; he made himself necessary to all and was universally courted. The same provident sagacity enabled him to see the necessity of providing some counterpoise to the power of Spain as it affected him in his position of vassal to that monarchy; a power which required stronger curbing in consequence of its extent and preponderating influence in Italy; wherefore the alliance of the church, if the two interests could be identified, he thought would render his friendship necessary to Philip in political matters, independent of its power over the bigoted mind of that sovereign, and thus extend his influence over all the princes of Italy.

The most difficult part of this plan was, first the choice of a pope and afterwards securing his election; but Cosimo seldom failed in picking out good instruments and was always well served: he had already cast his eye on the Cardinal Giovanni Angelo de' Medici who to avoid the tyranny of Paul IV. had long resided at the baths of Lucca; thence he made frequent visits to Florence, and Cosimo had induced Philip to give him the archbishopric of Milan as an immediate preparation for the papacy. He bore the character of a simple and mild man, well acquainted with European politics, not encumbered with near kinsmen, and therefore unlikely to involve Italy in war for mere

family interests. Besides him there were no less than twenty-five cardinals intriguing for the popedom, but Cosimo managed his influence so adroitly that his own candidate was ultimately elected. The consequence of this was a cardinal's hat for Don Giovanni de' Medici as already noticed with a prospect of the future pontificate at an early age, and the declaration of Pius IV. that he would consider Cosimo's interests as his own and wished both to be identified; that one would always be served and assisted by the other, and between them there was to be only a single heart and a single soul*.

COTEMPORARY MONARCHS.—England: Mary to 1558; then Elizabeth.—Scotland: Mary.—France: Henry II. until 1559; then Francis II.—Spain: Philip II.—Emperor: Charles V. to 1557; then Ferdinand I.—Naples and Sicily: Philip of Spain.—Portugal: John III. until 1557; then Sebastian.—Popes: Paul IV. (Caraffa) to 1559; then Pius IV. (Medici of Milan) in 1559.—Turkey: Sultan Solyman.

* Galluzzi, *Lib. iii^o, cap. i^o*, pp. 265-273.

CHAPTER V.

FROM A.D. 1560 TO A.D. 1575.

COSIMO I.

DUKE OF FLORENCE AND SIENA.

IN taking a retrospective view of this reign we shall see that by a rigorous administration of law, a comparatively impartial but searching taxation, a sustained extensive and penetrating spy-system, and unrelaxing vigilance in every branch of government Cosimo the First had worked even more on the fears of his subjects than their hate, so that between terror, self-interest, necessity, and turpitude, he was universally obeyed and the old republican spirit of Florence completely broken. His most determined enemies were banished; none were in a condition to attempt anything against him without foreign aid; their chief Piero Strozzi was an open foe and the Duke feared none besides. This general feeling of security, though not undisturbed by care, first prompted him to that daring enterprise of driving the French from Siena as a first step in his contemplated course of aggrandizement. Yet, audacious as it was, it only accumulated business without removing him from the centre of domestic politics, a point of infinite consequence to one who ruled in lofty solitude over a crushed and discontented people. Existing forms were still maintained but they had long ceased to be more than simple offices for the registration of his will: the secret council had become rather a post of honour and reward for state servants than a cabinet of

privy councillors, for Cosimo never divulged his projects to any but the secretary Bartolommeo Concini. The whole Senese war was conducted by himself alone; he was up late and early directing all and infusing his own spirit into everything; even the Marquis of Marignano knew no more than what was at the moment to be executed. When at the conclusion of hostilities he turned his mind to arts and ordered Vasari to paint the walls of the great council chamber with the principal military events, the artist represented Cosimo in the midst of his counsellors, who were supposed to be suggesting a plan of campaign; but on seeing this he wrote the following characteristic note. "The crown, and the presence of those counsellors with which you design to surround us in the deliberation on the war of Siena are not necessary, *because we alone were there*; but you may paint *Silence*, and any other of the virtues; they will do as well as the counsellors."

Bartolommeo Concini alone had been sent to treat with Charles V. about this war and was afterwards stationed in Marignano's camp as a controller of his conduct, he only amongst all the ducal ministers possessing full confidence: by virtue of this he became Cosimo's sole agent and manager in the election of Pope Pius IV. and was cheered by the Roman people for that important business which secured them a mild and merciful successor to a ruthless tyrant. The reforms of Florentine government after 1532 although they greatly altered all republican institutions could not immediately reduce them to a simple skeleton: a mutable privy council was unsuitable to the notions of despotism, wherefore Cosimo soon created the several offices of the *Secretary of Reformations*, the *Auditor Fiscal*, the *Auditor of the Chamber*, and the *Secretary of Contracts*, with considerable powers in the preparation of all business destined ultimately to come before him, and afterwards formed them into a council called the "*Pratica Secreta*." This was an active and efficient body individually and collectively occu-

pied in the most important affairs; and being armed with the sovereign's presence weakened every other magistracy both in power and dignity, so that all authority gradually concentrated in the prince's person*. He diminished the once important privilege of citizenship by a promiscuous admission of people from the city, contado, and district, giving to each town the power of electing certain of its citizens to the freedom of Florence exempt from the usual liabilities. By this copious infusion the civic corporation was diluted and lowered in dignity, the honour became too common, and the whole body too full of heterogeneous matter to stand united any longer against the crown. Cosimo next assumed the administration of several magistracies, and appointed creatures of his own to discharge their duties, leaving forms, but moulding the substance of everything to the spirit of his rule. Having thus concentrated political power in his own person he determined to subdue the public mind, which the rigour of his laws had hitherto rather irritated than reformed.

The Archbishop Altoviti was a rebel, and the clergy both secular and regular were unwilling to submit to the deputed authority of his vicar: the friars proud of exclusive privileges and exempt from external jurisdiction gloried beyond the rest in their license, wherefore heresy seduction homicide and robbery had become common ecclesiastical errors; the nunneries were far from immaculate and a commission expressly appointed to protect their morals made them more angry than decent or devout. In 1562 the number of nuns in forty-five convents amounted to four thousand three hundred and forty-one, and it was rather increasing in consequence of the domestic treatment of Florentine women, which favoured by law and seconded by the fierceness of existing manners drove many to seek a quieter and less austere retirement. Regulations had been issued by

* *Relazione delle Magistrature Fiorentine dal Pompeo Neri, fatta nell'anno 1763, per il Gran. Duca Leopoldo, MS.*

Cosimo to prevent the friars entering any nunnery without a license from their superior, but this proving useless a complete reform of these religious orders became necessary. The Jesuits, then called "*Reformed Priests of the Order of Jesus*," were subsequently introduced as an antidote by the Cardinal of Carpi who sent two of them to Cosimo in 1546 and they soon absorbed all courtly favour, Jacopo Laynez became ducal confessor, and Ignatius Loyola earnestly recommended his disciples to the Duke who established them at Florence, and at Siena immediately after the conquest.

No victim was denied to the stern demands of the Inquisition, the only condition exacted was that punishment should be executed in Florence, for Cosimo was too jealous to allow of that tribunal's overstepping the bounds of purely religious questions to which it was more than once inclined. He prohibited heretical publications in 1549 and in 1553 allowed an edict of the Roman Inquisition to be published in the capital which condemned all Hebrew books, especially the Talmud, besides allowing every sort of vexatious proceeding against the Jews. This seems to have been the first attempt of the popes to assume a power of prohibiting certain publications in Tuscany, as Charles V. was the first secular prince who began it in Europe. Fearful of the reformed opinions infecting Flanders he in 1546 ordered the theological faculty of Louvaine to publish a list of those books not to be generally read; ten years later this catalogue was augmented and enforced by an imperial edict, but it was Paul IV. who first attempted to make it of universal obligation. For this purpose in 1559 he enumerated three distinct classes of prohibited works and a list of *printers* whose publications on any subject in any language were interdicted under the severest penalties; but Cosimo was far too prudent to allow this without looking forward to consequences: he found that the individual injury in Florence alone would amount to more than 100,000 ducats and every

printer and bookseller ruined ; that the result would be an "*Auto da fe*" of all the printed books in Paris Lyon and Germany, not excepting the Greek and Latin classics, many other works of infinite value and service to art and science, and even the Bible itself. Whereupon he at once confined the edict to religious publications astrology and magic. The Dominican monks of Saint Mark's would have blindly obeyed this decree had not Cosimo forbidden them, for he did not choose that the valuable literary presents of the Medici collected in their library should be thus sacrificed ; with these sole restrictions all other works were publicly burned in Florence. In the rest of Europe the injury was so extensive that Basil Zurich and Frankfort applied publicly to the Duke for protection through his influence at Rome from the effects of an edict which was destroying them.

Cosimo would allow only civil jurisdiction over priests accused of political crimes ; he revised and regulated the papal claims for tithes, also those of the Roman office for the erection of Saint Peter's established by Julius II. which was a constant drain on all funds bequeathed for pious uses and on other religious conditions. The extreme severity of Cosimo's government, the eternal domiciliary visits, the faintest indications of facts habitually punished as proved crimes, the frequency of exile and confiscation of property, all tended to maintain a deadly quiet in Florence during the Senese struggle ; but when that ceased, thinking perhaps that he had gone too far even for his own policy, a general pardon was proclaimed for exiles, the only one during his seventeen dismal years of despotism ! On this occasion five citizens called "*Graziatori*" or Pardoners, were appointed with full power to absolve all political criminals and even those under sentence of death for civil offences : their authority lasted two months, but as Cosimo pulled the strings the puppets moved as he listed and no one was deceived ; nevertheless this act of clemency somewhat cheered the universal gloom.

Where any real or imagined danger existed Cosimo's severity was unbounded, his implacability unappeasable; but he was also clear-sighted and well knew how to discriminate between true and false alarms: during the full stream of his tyranny and excess of rigour a club of young men was formed calling themselves the "*Pianigiani*" to the number of about thirty members of the principal Florentine families who carried a banner on which was painted cabbages and turnips; they used to sup together and always with some burlesque representation of worldly affairs, ridiculing amongst other things all the crowned heads of Europe, to each of which they attached an appropriate name and character. This club was of course denounced as dangerous to the state, but Cosimo treated it lightly; he observed that the Florentines were always in the habit of doing such things and they meant nothing; that conspiracies were not made in such places, in such numbers, nor with so various a set; and that as the Florentine brain must ever have something to work on, it was better employed in these amusements than in brooding melancholy. Many exiled families were restored by the "*Grazziatori*" particularly to Pistoia which faction had nearly depopulated; the republican laws were continually revised and corrected, for having been mostly the work of party they partook of the spirit and barbarism of their several epochs, a spirit more nearly akin to vengeance than adapted to example or improvement. Severe edicts were issued against assassins who were numerous; in 1556 proceedings were instituted against them without reference to the ordinary forms of justice, and both pardon and reward were offered to all who would reveal their employer's name before they did the murder: other regulations attempted the conservation, or rather the regeneration of morality; for Cosimo although he commonly made virtue subservient to self-interest appreciated the good of a moral population: others again secured the marriage portions of widows by making them payable even before any arrears of taxation

that might be owing to government*. By a decree of the twenty-sixth of August 1541 he reformed the "*Ruota*" or body of civil judges and prescribed limits to the duration of lawsuits with great benefit to the litigants whose vexations in the Florentine courts seem to have equalled any on record; this was followed by a second reform in May 1542 and in February 1548 the suits of those unable to pay were if required by the parties to be determined summarily without any attention to legal forms but simply to the investigation of truth. Blasphemy and unnatural crimes were rigorously punished, the first with perforation of the tongue, its amputation for a second offence, and lastly by condemnation to the galleys; the second by whipping, imprisonment, public exposure and other pains according to the culprit's age and quality, and for the third offence, the flames †.

An especial code was compiled for the ducal militia called the "*Bands*," entirely distinct from that of the capital and administered solely by provincial tribunals in order to relieve the more distant militiamen from the waste of time and money consequent upon litigation in the metropolis. The punishments of crimes purely military were distinguished from those of a mixed or merely civil nature when committed by these soldiers: they had various privileges and exemptions; amongst them an absolute freedom from all taxes except the gabella and the salt-tax: they were eligible to municipal honours and were not employed as public informers. The number of this militia in 1551 amounted to fourteen thousand six hundred and seventy-four, divided amongst eighteen provinces with a captain to each who ruled them according to established laws and regulations ‡.

The wars of Charles V. with France did infinite mischief to

* Leggi e Bandi di Toscana, Legge di Agosto, xii^o, 1550.

† Leggi e Bandi di Toscana, Affari tra Privati.—Deliberazione in beneficio de' Poveri Litiganti, and Legge, 25

Janaio, 1549.—Bando, 8 Luglio, 1542.

‡ Leggi e Bandi di Toscana, Affari tra Privati.—Deliberazione, Marzo 26, 1548.—Galluzzi, Lib. ii^o, cap. ix.—Adriani, Lib. xvi., p. 1169.

the commerce of every nation which engaged in them : Lyon was at that time the great emporium of Europe : its position being almost central between Flanders Germany and Italy naturally became the depôt of their various merchandize which was thence distributed into other parts of the continent. Hence also it had become the principal money-market of Europe and enabled the French monarchs to borrow the large sums required for war with great facility by mortgaging their revenues. Aware of this advantage Charles V. endeavoured to turn that stream of commerce and under heavy penalties prohibited any merchant in his dominions, which then formed the bulk of civilized Europe, from making their payments in the Lyonese market, but directing them to Augsburg as a more convenient centre between Italy and the Netherlands. This prohibition coupled with the cessation of trade between the belligerent powers disconcerted the whole mass of European trade but especially that of Italy which was so closely mixed up with the city of Lyon that the latter might have been taken for an Italian colony. The Florentines alone lent more than 1,250,000 of ducats to France during the war ; the Lucchese upwards of 730,000 ; Genoa, Milan, Portugal and Germany, as commercially represented in the Lyon money-market, also contributed large sums even against their own sovereigns ; but the commerce there being mainly absorbed by Italians this shock was severely felt in all the parent states. At Lucca the want of specie became so great that after coining all private bullion and ornaments a discussion ensued about sending even church plate to the mint, so numerous were the bankruptcies. The market of Florence was hurt to the amount of 600,000 ducats and in every part of Italy a great scarcity of specie existed : when this dearth was at its height Cosimo had most need of money for the Senese war and therefore pressed his subjects with forced loans and extraordinary taxation : he did not listen to the advice of those who urged him to imitate the emperor

by prohibiting money exchanges with Lyon well knowing the ruin it would bring on Florence, but more wisely resolved to extract all the national benefit he could out of existing circumstances. Knowing therefore that in consequence of the war Spain was deprived of all those commodities that were wont to reach her from Lyon and Italy through France, he managed to establish a direct commerce with that country for fine Tuscan fabrics, such as gold thread, silks, various kinds of cloths, gold brocades and nearly all the Florentine manufactures for which the return was raw silk, wool, cochineal, pearls and other jewellery. He endeavoured also to attract foreign manufacturers from Antwerp and various other places to settle at Pisa, and did persuade George Rosts, a Flemish tapestry manufacturer, and Samminiati, the chief silk-manufacturer of Lucca with five hundred workmen, to establish themselves in Florence. The object was to collect together and concentrate in his own territory every scattered remnant of Italian industry and thus establish a fertile source of national revenue*; but he mistook his means when in order to create a home market for the sale of manufactured silks in 1545 he placed a duty on their exportation, and in the same year settled a certain rate of wages for workmen in the various branches of the wool-trade†.

Venice was the only Italian state which had escaped this general decay; she had maintained peace and pursued its objects; but as Florence and her territory though greatly distressed had never been the actual seat of war except during the short incursion of Piero Strozzi and its accompaniments, every circumstance favoured Cosimo's plan, at least as a present

* By a proclamation of 12th December, 1545, any Florentine silk manufacturer who did not return within a month was outlawed and a price set upon his head, with great and permanent privileges for his murderer. (Vide *Leggi e Bandi di Toscana, Bando*,

12th December, 1545.)

† *Leggi e Bandi Tos., Affari di Commercio, &c., "Gratic,"* issued 24th November, 1546, and *Deliberazione*, 20th December, 1547.—*Leggi e Bandi di Tosc., Legge*, 22d Feb., 1545, and *Deliberazione*, Marzo 1, 1545.

expedient, and all the money expended by the French army in Siena and its territory was ultimately drained off to his dominions. With these stimulants Florentine industry began to revive from that languid and depressed condition to which years of calamity had reduced it, and the cloth trade was more especially benefited notwithstanding Cosimo's interference with its internal regulations. The increase of this manufacture in 1559 over that of the preceding year was as twenty to sixteen thousand pieces of cloth; the greatest number ever made during the republican rule having been about twenty-three thousand, and in 1561 even this was exceeded by seven thousand; but then the war and almost exclusive supply of Spain occasioned so rapid and unnatural an increase which afterwards declined almost as speedily. The Levant trade had nearly ceased: there were but four Florentine establishments at Pera in 1554, and two years after only one of them existed. Cosimo however, learning that a Turkish envoy was at Venice immediately invited him to Florence and succeeded in renewing the ancient treaties of commerce with that people; but Florentine trade was then extinct, the place was pre-occupied and the more western nations too firmly established to suffer competition.

This unrelaxing care and ready sagacity in improving every casual and evanescent advantage offered by times and circumstances was what chiefly enabled Cosimo to raise such sums as he did for war and national defence. In 1552 he imposed a tax on the grinding of flour for three years, but finding it easily evaded he varied the method of collection and supplied his wants by a forced loan of 200,000 ducats. This was divided into several classes according to their known means and is said to have been paid with great facility: another was imposed in 1558 and from none of them were absentees exempted, no matter what might be the occasion of their absence*. These and

* *Leggi e Bandi di Toscana, Legge 1^a e 2^a, 7th October, 1552, and 9th December, 1553.*

many other searching branches of extraordinary taxation formed the principal source of Cosimo's war fund ; but he also borrowed at Antwerp Venice and Genoa without difficulty, for his payments were punctual and the ease with which by the force of his machinery he suddenly raised vast and extraordinary exactions from his people never left him without resources. The other European princes marvelled how so much could be extracted from so small a state, for they saw him not only contribute his own share to the cost of war but also money to the imperial troops who generally arrived in a state of destitution and consequent mutiny. The Senese war cost fully 3,000,000 of ducats, a sum exceeding that amount in pounds sterling of the present day : a vast effort for so small and exhausted a nation urged into unnatural exertion as it were by the galvanic influence of its chief. To secure provisions for this contest he contracted with Genoa for a three years' supply at a fixed price from 1552 : and in 1554 when the war increased consumption and distress was extreme, he, as already noticed, after vainly attempting to fix a price for the corn market, supplied the country by declaring the trade free with only a fixed importation duty from the merchant. This mitigated the intensity of public suffering amidst universal scarcity and contributed to maintain a war in which famine, force, and a superior genius, assisted Cosimo against every effort of his adversaries.

But the Duke of Florence traded with Spain and Flanders also on his own private account in corn jewellery and Italian merchandize ; a pernicious custom for the general interests of trade, and ruin to individuals. In 1558 the scarcity had spread all over Italy and Sicily ; war had driven the Lombard peasantry from their labours ; no seed had been sown for three years in the Senese territory, and in that of Florence the sudden revival of trade and bright prospects of gain had raised the commercial at the expense of the agricultural spirit, and grain and wine and oil were rare productions from the Tuscan

soil. Candia and Corsica supplied wine for the consumption of Pisa and Lower Tuscany, but oil became so scarce that in 1559 the cloth trade was supplied from Perugia Genoa Naples and Provence. All these things Cosimo personally overlooked; he had indeed a minister to superintend the various branches of public economy and private trade but no steps were taken without his knowledge, and autograph notes were attached to every document. Currency, taxes, forced loans, and all the various and complicated modes of imposition were regulated by him alone even to the classification of individuals: he also reestablished the lottery in the form of a company, both for money and jewels, which gained 30,000 ducats in the first drawing. Many of the most vexatious and oppressive taxes were imposed ostensibly for the war, but such weeds take deep root; they still continued in peace and finally became permanent branches of revenue! Leghorn was made a free port and its population encouraged by exemption from taxes and other immunities; he built and peopled the town of Porto Ferraio by similar means and the extension of these privileges to any foreigners who would colonise it: Pisa in like manner was favoured both in merchandize and agriculture, and under his care and presence began to revive from her long and melancholy depression: her drains were restored, her rich lands no longer swamped or pestilent through stagnant waters; her university flourished; the court often resided there; the incipient order of San Stefano was established there; commerce and manufactures, already introduced by Portuguese and other strangers, were still encouraged there, and everything now combined to enliven the aspect of that once illustrious community*. The other subject towns were similarly cared for and every effort was exerted even to the establishment of public spectacles and such amusements, that might win the subject's meek and cheerful submission to despotic sway. The fine arts were encouraged with all

* Leggi e Bandi di Toscana, *passim*.

the liberality and much of the taste of the older Medici: artists were supported by regular salaries and encouraged by his notice; they were treated, according to their talents, as men of genius, *as gentlemen by nature and acquirements if not by birth*, and were never placed in that painful equivocal and false position which they are so often compelled though indignantly to accept in the lordly mansions and palaces of England. Cosimo was most anxious to tempt Michael Angelo back to Florence and addressed him in terms worthy of those strong intellects which level worldly rank and acknowledge the nobility of genius even though it should illuminate the mind of a simple artist. "We well know," he says, "we well know the respect due to your years and extraordinary genius: here you shall be your own master and in peace, and all our endeavours shall be for your comfort and your honour." He could not succeed: the disease of the stone, the entreaties of friends and the erection of Saint Peter's compelled Buonarruoti to refuse*.

In February 1560 Donna Lucrezia de' Medici was received at Ferrara by her husband Alphonso II. with all the taste and magnificence that rendered that court famous beyond all others in Italy. The young Cardinal Don Giovanni accompanied his sister and then proceeded to Rome attended by a numerous suite of distinguished literary men chosen by Cosimo as his most fitting companions, and with so much honour that by the time he entered that capital his cavalcade had swelled to the number of two thousand five hundred horsemen†. Pius IV. received him as an adopted son, blindly prophesying that he would furnish a fourth pontiff to the house of Medici with which the holy father loved to be thought connected although himself a Milanese of rather humble race. Don Giovanni was lodged in the palace and attracted universal regard by his

* Galluzzi, Lib. iiº, cap. ix. and x.

† Cini, Vita, Lib. vii., p. 447.—Adriani, Lib. xvi., p. 1139.—Galluzzi, Lib. iii., cap. i., p. 275.

youth, his uncommon beauty, which says Adriani "was rather divine than human;" by his modesty, gravity, and well-regulated mind. He had been educated expressly for the Church and during a three months' residence at Rome showed much discretion and character by shunning every court intrigue, avoiding every corruption, and occupying his time in doing good offices to others as a mediator with both Cosimo and the pontiff. Pius soon made him Archbishop of Pisa and endeavoured to bring about a marriage between his eldest brother and Maria Princess of Portugal, but she being too proud to marry the offspring of a simple duke the Pope immediately offered to raise Cosimo to the kingly dignity, and this would have happened but for the jealousy of Philip II. which fomented by his ministers filled his mind with notions of Milan being in jeopardy from a secret alliance between Rome, Florence, Venice and Ferrara. Seeing this and unwilling to exasperate a king whose friendship was necessary to both, they followed the Duke of Alba's advice and relinquished the negotiation, which in some measure relieved that monarch's anxiety; for though fully sanctioning the election of a Spanish subject to the papacy Philip still looked with extreme suspicion on the unusual devotion of that subject to the able and powerful Medici *.

Niccolo Orsini Count of Pitigliano now demands our attention: he was one of the infamous nobles of that age whose lack of power alone prevented their shining with all the notoriety of a Nero or a Caligula, and the transaction about to be related presents a curious picture of times but little removed from those to which the great Florentine secretary is accused of teaching "Macchiavelism!" Having dispossessed his own father and left him without means of sustenance in a wretched state of existence at Rome, he oppressed his vassals, attempted the chastity of his son's wife, and retained the town of Soana in despite of all

* Cini, Vita, Lib. vii., p. 446. — Adriani, Lib. xvi., pp. 1140-65. — Galluzzi, Lib. iii., cap. i^o, p. 276.

the treaties and the entreaties of Cosimo to whom it belonged as a portion of the Senese dominions. Young Orsini indignant at the domestic insult consulted Cosimo about the surest mode of murdering his own father ; but the Duke deeming such an act somewhat too rough and dangerous for a son to attempt kindly undertook the office, resolving to despatch him by other hands or eject him from Soana. He accordingly sent assassins to murder him at Pitigliano but either from want of courage or Niccola's precautions the attempt miscarried, and it was then resolved that the young Count Alexander should surprise the town of Pitigliano supported by Chiappino Vitelli with six thousand men. Orsini detected the plot and arrested Alexander who subsequently escaped but Vitelli marched on Sovana or Soana, and the final result was a subsequent acquisition of that place by Cosimo *. Towards the end of October the Duke of Florence leaving his son Francesco to conduct the government, proceeded from Siena to Rome attended by eight hundred Senese and Florentine gentlemen and their followers : at the gates he was received by Cardinals Borromeo and Vitelli and afterwards by those of Ferrara and Santa Fiore : the Florentines in Rome whether rebels friends or exiles also assembled to do him honour as one united body all under one common uniform chosen for the occasion, the garb of conciliation humility and peace ! Forty of these in crimson raiment escorted the *Tyrant of Florence* from the city gate to the palace, and the whole population was eager to gaze on a prince whose wisdom prudence and good fortune had filled Italy with wonder. There were no doubt many friends of Cosimo's amongst the Roman Florentines, but more of his enemies ; wherefore his triumph must have been complete at beholding at his stirrup, all eager to do him honour, those very men who but a few years before were moving heaven and earth to annihilate him by open war and

* Adriani, Lib. xvi., p. 1156. — Galluzzi, Lib. iii°, cap. i°, p. 280. — Cini, Vita, Lib. vii°, p. 445.

secret assassination as one of the most odious tyrants that ever oppressed a nation *! Yet Cosimo was Cosimo still! A little greater; better known; more feared, more respected, more formidable; but the same inexorable tyrant of their country, the same Duke of Florence as in the by-gone war! When after a few brief years the most generous passions and principles thus subside and melt under the fervour of successful villany, hailing former evils as a present good, the human mind is staggered and we ask whether any principle, save the immutability of truth and virtue, be worth a contest!

Cosimo soon became absolute in Rome; he directed the pontiff in making preparations for a general council which, although well-disposed, the latter would scarcely have had the resolution alone to accomplish; but so strong was the public belief of Cosimo's influence, especially in the sacred college, that he had the credit of then nominating the future pontiff, and a paper inscribed "*Cosimus Medicis Pontifex Maximus*" was placed on the statue of Pasquin. The council was proclaimed in November to be held at Trent on Easter-day of the following year and was in fact only a revival of the last which had been dissolved by war, but with more sanguine expectations of ecclesiastical conciliation and religious peace †.

Cosimo remained about a month longer healing divisions within and without Rome even as far as Tuscany and Lombardy, and thus strengthened and consolidated his influence amongst every class of that capital. On this occasion Pius IV. presented to the young Cardinal de' Medici his private palace and gardens, and to the Duchess of Florence the confiscated possessions of Bindo Altoviti on condition that they should devolve to Don Garzia at her death. With such favour and influence Cosimo returned to Florence as the most powerful prince in Italy, and if the vast authority of the popes be considered perhaps

* Galluzzi, Lib. iii^o, cap. i^o, p. 283.—Adriani, Lib. xvi^o, p. 1165.

† Platina, Vita di Pio IV., p. 570.—Muratori, Annali, Anno 1561.

with the greatest moral influence of any in Europe*. On the twenty-fifth of November 1560 while the Duke was still at Rome the celebrated Andrea Doria breathed his last when nearly ninety-four years of age; and if anything were wanting to show the opinion entertained of him, the belief that a fearful storm, which swept the shores of Genoa with terrible destruction of life and property, foretold his dissolution is sufficient, because such portentous honours were in those days only given to crowned heads or the most illustrious princes of distinguished reputation†. On his return from Rome Cosimo spent some time in regulating the Valdichiana, the Maremma, and Leghorn; at Siena he A.D. 1561. formed a council out of those nobles who along with the Captain of the People were destined to elect the Seignory privy counsellors and other magistracies; he also created an office called the *Conservators of the State* to superintend the revenues; he strengthened the fortifications of Grosseto, sketched out some plans for re-peopling the Maremma and certain improvements at Leghorn and finally settled himself at Pisa‡. He had always been impressed with the importance of keeping up a naval force capable of defending his coast and combating the infidels, and therefore instituted an order of knighthood similar to that of Malta which secured a permanent squadron of galleys without the expence of their maintenance. Pope Pius assisted him with ecclesiastical funds; he also worked on the opulent vanity of Florence and contributed largely himself, so that on the sixth of November the institution of this order took place; and on the festival of San Stefano, the second of August 1562, when he celebrated the anniversary of the battle of Marciano and the victory of Monte Murlo, that pope-saint was made patron of it, Cosimo himself assuming the office of Grand

* Cini, Vita, Lib. vii., p. 547.—
Adriani, Lib. xvi., p. 1168.—
Galluzzi, Lib. iii., cap. i., pp. 285 to 288.
† Muratori, Annali, Anno 1560.

‡ Cini, Vita, Lib. vii., p. 449.—
Adriani, Lib. xvi., p. 1168.—
Galluzzi, Lib. iii., cap. ii.—
Ammirato, Lib. xxxv., p. 531.

Master which was made hereditary in the ducal line of Florence. None but nobles were admitted as knights and marriage was no obstacle, but conjugal fidelity was one of their obligations, coupled with neighbourly charity and fidelity to the Grand Master: they were rich, had great privileges, and very soon equipped a small but active squadron with which some brilliant exploits were subsequently achieved *.

We now come to the narration of a domestic tragedy which is still involved in mystery and will probably never be clearly elucidated, because such deeds are not placed on record by those whose testimony would render discussion useless. In the autumn of 1562 Cosimo as was his custom made a journey through the provinces accompanied by the duchess and her children and remained for a while at Rosignano about ten miles from Leghorn for the enjoyment of sporting. The want of rain this year was supposed to have engendered a fever which spread over Italy but was particularly virulent in the Maremma: on the sixteenth of November Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici was taken ill at Rosignano and died on the twenty-first at Leghorn: his younger brother Don Garzia fell sick about the same time but struggled against the fever for twenty days and finally expired at Pisa: the duchess who had been long suffering from illness soon followed her children: Ferdinand, the fourth son, was ill in a slighter degree but ultimately recovered, and while still on a sick bed received from Pius IV. the cardinal's hat left empty by his brother's death, apparently at the request of Cosimo who if this be true seems not to have forgotten his ambition even in the midst of death and domestic calamity†. Such was the public account and substantially the same as that given by Cosimo in his letters to Don Francesco and Philip II. Now nothing was more likely than such attacks

* Cini, *Vita*, Lib. vii., p. 451. — Adriani, *Lib.* xvi., p. 1178. — Galuzzi, *Lib.* iii., cap. ii. — Fontana, *Pregi della Toscana*. — Ammirato, *Lib.* xxxv.,

p. 531.

† Ammirato however says it was a spontaneous act of Pius; Cini agrees in this, and it is far from improbable.

of fever in low unwholesome districts at a moment of general sickness when the town of Pietra Santa, only a few miles distant, had been nearly depopulated and when seventy in a hundred were falling sick at Florence itself. Cosimo's first short letter to Don Francesco gives a simple account of the progress and fatal termination of this disease; but his second elaborate epistle which tells of Don Garzia's death appears more artificial and mingled with so many studied phrases of piety and resignation, as to give the notion of insincerity. If the first letter spoke truth the second must also be believed and all idea of crime be dissipated: if these princes were ill, one for five or six days and the other for twenty, it is strange that a tale of blood should be instantly fabricated and not only spread throughout Italy but extend even to the Council then sitting at Trent and be generally believed by the assembled prelates and ambassadors! As the story ran, one brother had killed the other and the fratricide had been murdered by his own father in anger at the deed! Certain it is that Cosimo was esteemed fully capable of so horrible an act for the tale found general credit. Some peculiarities also occurred: the body of Giovanni was not exposed according to custom at Florence, a waxen image having been laid on the coffin instead: this might have been requisite but it had the appearance of mystery; it encouraged suspicion, and Cosimo had too many foes, was too bitterly hated not to become the object of calumny whenever a fair or a foul occasion was presented: yet there is a curious fact mentioned by Galluzzi; that the story of these murders is recorded in all the manuscript chronicles of the time but in none of the published historians! They differ in dates and circumstances as may be supposed but prove the general impression, and what is worse, the universal belief in Cosimo's capability of so acting. There seems no reason for discrediting the story of a dispute between the brothers, nor that a slight wound might have been received when Don Giovanni was already fever-struck nor that both accidents might have

thus combined to cause his death; and we naturally seek for some extenuating circumstances in contemplating so horrible a deed: but in whatever way it occurred the blow must have been terrible to Cosimo's ambition if not to his paternal love; this boy was his favourite, and his early promotion gave the Duke, who was still in the vigour of life, reasonable expectations of seeing him in the chair of Saint Peter. His grief and indignation against the destroyer of his hopes must therefore have been excessive, and it is possible that a man so familiar with the dagger and the bowl might have given way to fury even against his own offspring; and from habitual self-command, its outbreak and mastery over such a spirit would have been so much the more terrible. His own letter describes Don Garzia as convalescent when Giovanni died, but adds "*he was suddenly seized with a new fever, and it became necessary to bleed him*"*. Now it is far from improbable, if the quarrel between the two brothers be correctly stated, that just before this sudden relapse the duchess, as the story declares, might have taken her favourite Don Garzia to implore his father's forgiveness while his fury was still unabated, and that then the deed was done; but it does not necessarily follow that he was killed on the spot, and an illness of ten or twelve days is no unusual consequence of a mortal wound. If the narrative of these murders is true the Florentine historians were not likely to record it while the Medici ruled in Florence, and private family records are precisely what should be searched for the prevailing belief, if not for the veracity of such occurrences. The story was in fact so current in the Council of Trent where it was received from Rome, that the Duke's ambassador Giovanni Strozzi officially informed his master of the circumstance. Botta, Muratori, Galluzzi and Sismondi all mention this tragedy with various judgment; the latter citing *De Thou* and the

* Sismondi, vol. xii., p. 180.—Cini, p. 534.—Adriani, Lib. xvii., p. 1273.—Lib. vii^o, p. 460.—Galluzzi, Lib. iii^o, Muratori, Anno 1562.—Botta, Storia cap. iii., n. 21.—Ammirato, Lib. xxxv., d'Italia, Lib. xii., p. 117, 12mo. Ed.

manuscript chronicle of "*Settimani* *," but the following account is from the "*Origine e Descendenza della Casa de' Medici*," a manuscript history of the family, which as it seems to be that generally received by modern historians may be here translated, the date however being erroneous. "And thus finding himself with a good large family the Lady Eleonora his wife went willingly with him to Pisa, especially in winter, for the purpose of avoiding the sharp air of Florence as well as the conspiracies of the Florentines. Repairing to the best sporting country for his own great satisfaction and the delight of his sons who were continually diverting themselves in this manner, there happened a strange accident: for some morning about the month of February 1562 (November?) the Cardinal of Medicis, second son of Duke Cosimo began to dispute about the sports of the field with Don Garzia his brother, and son of the same Grand Duke. The cause of this dispute was a goat, and both coming to high words and worse deeds, Don Garzia drew his sword and wounded Cardinal Giovanni severely in the thigh. The Duke Cosimo hearing a scuffle ran to the place where he heard this noise and finding mischief already done applied the dressings with his own hand and instantly sent off to Florence for Master Antonio Venturini surgeon from Sarzana; but because the sword had passed quite through the thigh and the muscles of the same, for which thing there was little remedy, the poor Signor after a few days died at Leghorn. The Duke being at Pisa on his return to Florence; the duchess (who loved Don Garzia as she loved her own eyes) knowing that he had committed a great crime, but thinking that the father's anger

* *Notizie del Palazzo di Pisa da Anguillesi.*" — De Thou, "*Histoire Universel.*" *Settimani* is well known but kept secret and difficult of access. The "*Origine e Descendenza della Casa de Medici*," I have found accu-

rate where I could confront it with good authorities. An old copy of this MS. is now in my own possession, the date of which, from the character of the writing, is probably of the seventeenth century.

was past, called Don Garzia to her and said, 'Go Don Garzia to your father's presence and on your knees ask pardon for the fault you have been guilty of.' He, prompt at his mother's command immediately obeyed, presenting himself before the Duke his father. But the blood was still boiling; the duchess was in too much haste: the father on seeing the son, although humbly and with eyes full of tears he sought pardon for the crime he had committed, not heeding what his boy was saying and still overcome by rage, without regarding anything seized on his sword and with one blow despatched him. The duchess hearing of the shocking event was instantly overcome by so bitter a grief that taking to her bed she closed her eyes and overcome by sorrow most miserably died. The three bodies came to Florence in coffins, the people and the citizens making a great tumult because of this accident. By the death of these personages the felicity of that family terminated, for in beauty of countenance they all three resembled angels".*

This tale is simply told and accompanied by so many circumstances as to impart considerable weight to its authority: other manuscripts say that the duchess accompanied Don Garzia to Cosimo's presence and saw him murdered; but with some trifling variation in circumstances the substance of all is said to be the same and shows the general belief in Cosimo's guiltiness. Eleonora herself was not much regretted; though very charitable she teemed with Spanish pride, had but little intercourse with the dames of Florence and was ever surrounded by her country-people: she however was the only channel to the Duke's favour and thus far lamented, for she alone could smooth his angry moods, and maintained her influence to the last.

These melancholy events did not at once detach Cosimo from his duties or interests, but they seem in conjunction with severe constitutional disorders to have decided him in the accomplishment of a design which he had long been meditating, namely

* "Origine e Descendenza della Casa de' Medici," MS., folio 265.

the partial resignation of his sovereign authority to Don Francesco. The latter was recalled from Madrid, but not immediately associated with his father's government, for
A.D. 1563.
Cosimo employed the year 1563 in regulating and augmenting his navy, then commanded by Duke Alexander's natural son Giulio de' Medici; and also in disciplining the crews and exercising the knights of San Stefano in their new profession. Abroad, the Duke was occupied in accelerating his son's marriage with the Archduchess Giovanna of Austria and in settling a dispute of precedence between Florence and Ferrara a question to which vast and even ridiculous importance was attached in those ceremonious days. At last in the month of May 1564, being reduced by sickness, with passions weakened, ambition blunted, and a desire for peace
A.D. 1564.
and personal repose; after seven-and-twenty years of arduous and difficult government in the most trying times; Cosimo, the jealous, grasping, high-reaching Cosimo astonished Italy and the world by resigning public affairs to his son's management and thus steadying him betimes on the throne of Tuscany. The general tranquillity of Europe and perfect calm of Italy favoured this act which was formally ratified on the first of May, but substantially under the following conditions and restrictions. He retained the ducal title and supreme authority over all Florentine Tuscany; the marquisate of Castiglione della Pescaia; the nomination of his naval and military commanders and the governor and subaltern authorities of Siena; the revenues of all Senese allodial possessions, and the mines and revenues of Pietra Santa: he preserved an exclusive right to the use of every ducal palace and villa and to all his moveable property, with certain commercial capitals and credits within and without the state. No governors or military commanders were to be nominated or displaced without his permission; no part of the territory was to be alienated, the works at the Pitti palace were to be continued at Don Francesco's

cost and a liberal salary was to be paid to the young cardinal Don Ferdinand. As this act of abdication derived its force and vigour entirely from his will, so in case of dispute it was to be interpreted by that alone, which he resolved should still reign paramount in Tuscany.

A proceeding so unlooked for surprised everybody and he was even suspected of aspiring to the papacy, but the abdication was really superficial; Francesco became a simple lieutenant and supreme power remained essentially with Cosimo; he thus threw off the drudgery of government, secured a quiet succession for his son, and cleared himself from the charge of ambition with which he had been generally taunted*.

Don Francesco at twenty-four years of age assumed the title of Prince Regent on his father's birth-day the eleventh of June 1564 and received the prompt submission of both states but the good-will of neither, for he possessed more than Cosimo's most odious qualities without his talents. The latter after arranging what was necessary for his own dignity and comfort retired to the pleasures of a country life and comparative tranquillity; without however renouncing all attention to the government or entirely ceasing to watch Don Francesco's proceedings. For this purpose he gave him Bartolommeo Concini as minister and through him influenced the Regent's measures while he secured a certain channel of information. Neither did Cosimo abandon his navy but energetically promoted every improvement; of ten galleys which he ordered to be built five were entirely at his own expense, the crews of the rest were maintained by Philip who was joined by eight of them in his great African expedition†. About this time the Corsican insurrection led by Sampiero against Genoese oppression was at its height and twice had these insurgents offered the sovereignty of their island

* Mecatti, *Storia Cronolog.* — Cini, —Adriani, *Lib.* xvii^o, p. 1276.
Vita, *Lib.* vii^o, p. 464. — Galluzzi, † Mecatti, *vol.* ii^o, p. 727.—Ammi-
Lib. iii^o, *cap.* iii^o, p. 38.—Ammirato, *Lib.* xxxv., p. 539.—Adriani,
Lib. xxxv., p. 537.—Muratori, *Annali.* *Lib.* xviii^o, p. 1280.

to Cosimo ; but he feared the odium of disturbing the peace of Italy, was too prudent to enter singly on his own account into a war with such a naval power as Genoa, and not generous enough to assist the brave Corsicans on theirs ; so with a few nominal succours as a mark of courtesy to Sampiero and vexation to the Genoese, he quietly left them to their fate*.

The most remarkable occurrence of this year was the death of Michelangelo Buonarruoti an artist whose works in architecture, sculpture and painting have for more than three centuries been the wonder and admiration of the world. This great man possessed the rare merit of never having been even accused of crime or immorality during an active life of ninety years' duration, and in an age when all moral ties were habitually broken despised and ridiculed ! His body was brought to Florence where a magnificent public funeral did honour to his memory ; but only after having been clandestinely smuggled from Rome in a bale of merchandise ! It was buried in San Lorenzo. Two days after his decease the great Galileo entered this world as if to compensate mankind for his loss † ! On the Emperor Ferdinand's death in June 1564 the negotiations for a marriage between the Prince Regent and Giovanna of Austria were renewed with his son Maximilian II. and to facilitate it Pius IV. wanted to make Tuscany an arch-duchy so that the Medici might equal Giovanna in dignity, but the emperor objected to this and the idea was abandoned. Lucrezia de' Medici Duchess of Ferrara died and not without suspicions of foul play on the part of her husband, who was now affianced to Giovanna's sister the Arch-duchess Barbara : both marriages were to have been celebrated in Trent but the disputes for precedence prevented this and each prince was married in his own dominions. Carlo Borromeo whom Pius IV. had despatched to honour Francesco's nuptials was suddenly recalled in consequence of the

* Adriani, Lib. xviii^o, p. 1287.— † Osservatore Fiorentino, vol. v., p. Ammirato, Lib. xxxv., p. 537.—Gal- 33.—Ammirato, Lib. xxxv., p. 538. luzzi, Lib. iii., cap. iii., p. 45.

pontiff's illness; and his death on the ninth of December 1565 threw a gloom over the marriage of Giovanna which seemed almost to foretel her subsequent unhappiness. She was received at Florence with such taste and splendour as were alone equalled by the reception given to her sister at Ferrara then the most brilliant court in Italy: yet she came to a dwelling of seduction, adultery, murder, and every other infamy, all covered with a gold-bespangled veil*. Cosimo taking advantage

A. D. 1565. of profound peace and abundant revenues determined

to build a strong frontier town on the ecclesiastical confines near Castrocara touching the territory of Forli, but while the priest, as was then usual, performed the ceremony of laying the corner stone the sky became suddenly overcast with a dark mass of clouds and the whole country was thrown into deep shadow, all but that single spot marked out for the incipient fortress: this was taken as a favourable omen and the place immediately received the appellation of "*Terra del Sole*." On the confines of Urbino too, near Sestina he built another town, and a third in the vicinity of "*Pieve di Santo Stefano*" called "*Sasso di Simone*," all for the strengthening of his frontier: with equal providence Cosimo took advantage of peace to cast artillery and maintain his defences in an efficient state, feeling war to be the time for benefiting by preparations already made, not for making them; and when the archduchess, or as she was then called, the Queen Giovanna entered Florence towards the end

A.D. 1566. of this year, Cosimo was enabled to send her an escort

of four thousand regular infantry and five hundred light horse all well equipped, in perfect discipline, and ready for the field †.

Pius IV. was one of those pontiffs who without giving much promise in the second rank won golden opinions in the first;

* Mecatti, Storia Cronologica di Toscana.—Orig. e Descen. de' Medici.—Cini, Lib. vii^e, p. 471.—Galluzzi, Lib. iii., cap. iv., p. 59.—Botta, Storia

d'Italia, Lib. xii., p. 157.—Ammirato, Lib. xxxv., p. 540.

† Ammirato, Lib. xxxv., p. 538.

a fact as regarded public affairs, in some degree perhaps the consequence of Cosimo's prudent influence. Be this as it may, he left behind him a character for virtue disinterestedness and patriotism unstained by the usual crimes and vices of popes and applauded in the memory of his subjects. He reassembled and terminated the Council of Trent with a sincere intention of executing its decrees; he reformed the Roman tribunals, maintained peace and abundance in his dominions, promoted men of reputation to the purple, and thus laid the foundation for better pontificates; he avoided nepotism, ornamented Rome, and with great experience of the world united considerable erudition and an extraordinary memory. His nephew the Cardinal Carlo Borromeo influenced a large portion of the sacred college, and against their inclinations but from a disinterested conviction of his merit, persuaded them to choose Michele Ghislieri, called the Cardinal Alessandrino, chief Inquisitor of Rome. His election was published on the seventh of January 1566 to the great terror and mortification of the Romans, who expected a second Caraffa, nor did the beneficent name of Pius V. abate their consternation. When informed of this he exclaimed "We trust with God's assistance to act in such a way that the Romans will be more sorry for our death than for our election" *.

From the "*Fra Michele dell' Inquisizione*" as he was named, no mildness was expected, so that his first acts agreeably surprised the world: yet he had full provocation for any reform however rigid when fifty thousand lascivious friars were swarming over Italy, and plunged in utter licentiousness had become a national calamity! The nuns also, as might be expected with such visitors to confess them, forgot their vows, welcomed their paramours, and gave ample scope for the reproof and ridicule of heretics†. Pius V. lauded Cosimo's religious zeal as shown

* Platina, Vite, p. 576.—Muratori, Annali.

† Botta, Lib. xii., p. 162.—Galluzzi, Lib. iii^o, cap. iv., p. 63.

by his naval operations against the infidels, and although the latter disapproved of the papal election a mutual compact was soon concluded between them for the surrender of criminals belonging to either state if demanded, and against making the frontier line a bar to the pursuit of obnoxious individuals whatever might be their offence. The first fruit of this was Cosimo's infamous abandonment of his friend and favourite Piero Carnesecchi to the pontiff's inquisitorial zeal and religious bigotry.

Carnesecchi was a Florentine of high family who through good and evil fortune had steadily adhered to the Medici: he had been secretary to Clement VII. was protected by Catharine of Medicis, and believed himself to be one of the most intimate friends and favourites of Cosimo. Tired of Rome, after the death of Clement he sought the company of learned men in both France and Italy and amongst them the principal reformers of the time, such as his countryman Peter Martyr, Bernardo Occhino of Siena, Melancthon and others, and thence became imbued with heretical opinions. Catharine of Medicis, who was more of a politician than a fanatic, protected him from the Inquisition in France; but removing to Venice he was again summoned, yet saved by Cosimo's dexterity from appearing at Rome until the pontificate of Pius IV. enabled him to go there with safety. By the Duke's influence, after a bold defence, he was pronounced free from heretical pollution and acknowledged as a true Catholic and obedient son of the Church: this warning was however not sufficient to deter Carnesecchi from continuing his intercourse with heretics or assisting the escape from Tuscany of *Pietro Gelido da San Miniato* called "*Il Pero*," a man of great talent and learning who had also served Clement VII. and afterwards Cosimo at the court of France. The Duchess Renata of Ferrara had converted and protected "*Il Pero*" both in France, where she had subsequently retired, and previously in Italy, and Carnesecchi's conversation confirmed his heretical opinions. While in France *Il Pero* incurred the queen's displea-

sure and fled to Geneva where he became a minister of the church and a ruined man: from Geneva he entreated the exertion of Cosimo's influence for the assembly of a council in the centre of Germany and the pontiff's personal attendance there, Carnesecchi as was believed, having suggested such application to the Duke. All this was well known; wherefore Pius V. believing Carnesecchi to be a leader of Italian heresy determined to crush him, and although Cosimo well knew that his friend on quitting Florence was destined to the block the gibbet or the stake, yet when placed in contact with political interests all friendship evaporated! He vainly attempted to save Carnesecchi by attributing his errors to mental vacillation rather than mature conviction, an assertion which was negatived thirteen months after by that martyr's unflinching resolution at the stake. On the twenty-first of September 1567, he calmly received his sentence and the flame-painted and devil-sprinkled cloak called "*Sambenito*" was thrown over him; execution was postponed for ten days at Cosimo's entreaty in order to give time for recantation, but Carnesecchi remained firm, despised death, and perished by decapitation and the flames. His behaviour was a fine example of the force of religious principle; perhaps his persecutor was no less sincere in his mistaken zeal; but Cosimo had no such excuse. Carnesecchi insisted on appearing at his execution in new linen with new and ornamented gloves (the only parts of his dress left uncovered by the "*Sambenito*") and met his fate with a spirit worthy of any martyr to religious opinions. This bigoted and bloody act, then common in Spain and England, was new in Italy and filled the land with dread: each individual trembled for himself, for his friends, and his kinsfolk; confidence was destroyed, and hardly a religious whisper disturbed the silence, even of the most secret chambers in Florence*.

* Botta, *Storia*, Lib. xii., p. 174. — —Adriani, *Lib.* xix., p. 1348. — Am-Galluzzi, *Lib.* iii°, cap. iv., pp. 65-72. — mirato, *Lib.* xxxv., p. 542.

Cosimo by thus immolating one of his dearest friends on the altar of political interest and fanaticism, spread terror and insecurity through his dominions and cleared the way for succeeding horrors: Aonio Paleario and the Socinians had sown suspicious seed in Siena and bitter fruits were produced; men and women were equally pursued with all the wrath of bigotry, and even the Pisan university soon became destitute of scholars and professors; five women were burned at Siena, and the witch and the philosopher bound hand in hand were dragged together before the dismal inquisitors *! Yet these were the days of Tasso, Ariosto, and Sannazzaro! But what can avail against bigotry? What slavery equals that of the mind? What delusions, what errors are more mischievous than those of religion?

As a widower, Cosimo unscrupulously indulged his natural temperament and made Eleonora degli Albizzi his mistress with her father's consent! Times were sadly changed since her great ancestor Rinaldo drove the first Cosimo trembling from his country! What would the proud Albizzi of those turbulent but high-spirited times have felt could they have foreseen that one of their own descendants had consented to sacrifice his daughter's honour to the passions of the worst tyrant of the rival race! Virginus stabbed his child to save her from a similar calamity: but the Florentines were not Romans! Cosimo's affection for this beautiful girl increased so rapidly that Don Francesco became alarmed lest it should end in marriage; his fear was augmented by reports from the Duke's chamberlain Sforza Almini who revealed many particulars and advised him to speak to his father on the subject. This imprudent counsel was followed and the Duke's rage became unbounded! So deadly was his fury that even the life of Francis might have paid for his temerity had not Cosimo first cooled his passion in the blood of Sforza whom he stabbed to the heart and then calmly resumed his ordinary amusements! Eleonora, after bear-

* Botta, Lib. xii., p. 180.

ing one son, was married to Carlo Panciatichi with a large portion, but disagreeing with her husband she attracted the attentions of Cosimo's youngest son Piero, and finally expired in a convent *. The death of Sampiero before Ajaccio in 1567 left his son in command of the insurgents and through him they made another offer of the Corsican sovereignty to Cosimo who refused it, although offered every assistance by Queen Catharine of France; he feared to offend King Philip, which was exactly what she desired, but contented herself with A. D. 1567. borrowing 100,000 ducats from Don Francesco to foment disturbance at home. Meanwhile the absurd contest for precedence between Florence and Ferrara continued with unmitigated asperity after Lucrezia de' Medici's death A. D. 1568. and Alphonso's second marriage. It had been referred to the Pope and emperor successively and together, but in vain; Alphonso wished for the latter's decision, Cosimo for that of the former; punctilios jealousies and objections bristled up on every side and the question at length furnished argument writing and printing for all the civilians of Italy. The power and antiquity of both countries were contrasted, the rights of the dukedom and republic compared; numberless definitions of nobility and merit were discussed; comparisons were drawn between the *Azzi*, the *Guelfi*, the *Obizzi*, and the *Ercoli* of Ferrara on one side; and the *Cosmi*, the *Lorenzi*, the *Pieri*, and the *Giovanni* on the other. Parallels were made between origins from commerce and origins from arms; nothing was left unmoved or unsifted by the contending advocates; and when the two races were exhausted they began to pull the two countries to pieces. The Ferrarese marshes were not to be named with the beautiful plains of Florence, but then the Arno must cede to the grander Po whose lofty embankments towered far above the Medician edifices; and no doubt could be enter-

* Origine e Descendenza della Casa de' Medici.—Galluzzi, Lib. iii., cap. iv. p. 74, et seq.

tained of the superior dignity and convenience of the latter river to the former whose southern position reduced it to a still deeper inferiority! Besides this, Ferrara was more open and consequently more healthy than Florence inclosed as the latter was between two ranges of mountains! Such was the puerile character of this dispute which nevertheless so excited the minds of all as to descend to the very peasantry; on the Garfagnana frontier the inhabitants actually commenced hostilities for the dignity of their respective dukes, and more serious warfare became imminent! But the time having expired when the courts of Rome and Vienna were bound to decide Cosimo wisely suggested to Pius V. that the simplest way of settling the matter would be to fulfil his predecessor's intentions and make a grand duchy of Tuscany; for, said Cosimo, as one pope had made Charlemagne an emperor there could be no doubt of another pope's power to create a grand duke. Such reasoning pleased, and moreover was unanswerable; wherefore on the twenty-fourth of August 1569 a bull appeared to that effect. In this was delineated the form of the new diadem which unlike the French Spanish or imperial crowns was radiated like that of the ancient kings, alternate with the Florentine lily; and "*Beneficio Pii V. Pont. Max.*" was inscribed on the circle. The bull which was signed on the twenty-seventh of August recapitulated the antique power and merits of Tuscany, but more especially noticed those of Cosimo himself; his zeal for the purity of religion; for the persecution of heretics; his promptness in delivering them up to justice; and his succours to France in the cause of the faith. Nor was his holy zeal as it shone in the order of San Stefano forgotten, nor the unrelaxing efforts of his navy against the infidels, nor his assistance to the imperial crown for the same purpose. These merits rendered Cosimo worthy of more exalted rank and thenceforth he was to take precedence of all other dukes and princes and be considered inferior to

A.D. 1569.

kings alone. This transaction was concealed by Pius, but Cosimo deemed it prudent to inform Philip and the emperor; they both acquiesced, and the Huguenots' defeat at Jarnac with the death of Condé was so pleasing to the Catholic world that Pius did not seek a more favourable occasion to proclaim the exaltation of a prince who with men and money had assisted in the war. The pope's nephew Don Michele Bonelli at last brought the bull to Florence and Cosimo on the thirteenth of December was installed with imposing magnificence as GRAND DUKE OF TUSCANY. He now assumed the title of MOST SERENE HIGHNESS, and repairing to Rome in February 1570 was crowned by the pontiff himself, notwithstanding all the remonstrances of the Spanish and imperial ambassadors who had orders so to act through the Duke of Ferrara's influence*.

A.D. 1570.

Thus did Cosimo reap the benefit of Carnesecchi's death; and it was remarked as an instance of his sagacity that a pope whose election he had not supported and of which he disapproved; a pope haughty and severe to every other prince in Europe, should evince such friendship for him! But Pius V., who with all his bigotry was a far better and sincerer man than Cosimo; appreciated the sacrifice of his favourite Carnesecchi and his profound devotion to the Church at a much higher value than the latter did. The only effect of the imperial protest therefore was to draw Pius and Cosimo more closely together and make them assert their entire independence of the empire: after this the Grand Duke endeavoured to impress on the pontiff's mind the necessity of promptly opposing a strong and universal resistance to the Turks who were then preparing for the conquest of Cyprus, or else expect an invasion of Italy. He sketched a plan for the purposed league and after persuading Pius to commence the necessary negotiations with Spain

* Cini, Vita, Lib. vii., p. 482.—Am. pp. 98-109.—Adriaui, Lib. xx°, pp. mirato, Lib. xxxv., p. 548.—Muratori, 1504-1508.
Annali.—Galluzzi, Lib. iii°, cap. iv°.

and Venice, and managing to have no less than sixteen cardinals created to overpower the Farnesian party in conclave, he returned triumphantly to Florence*.

The wrath of Maximilian II. was deep and loud against Pius V. and Cosimo : he confirmed the protest, threatened war, forbid any German prince to acknowledge the new title, was blamed and ridiculed by them all, and the whole German priesthood supported the pontiff. But the emperor had other causes of anger arising from the following incident, which were probably augmented by the complaints of his sister Giovanna.

When the corridor from the Pitti palace to the Palazzo Vecchio was commenced by Michael Angelo's friend and pupil Giorgio Vasari, it became necessary to remove or do considerable injury to several houses that interfered with the design, and amongst others to that of Antonio Martelli which was contiguous to the corridor. Martelli was a gentleman of noble but reduced family with two daughters, one of them his poverty had obliged him to give in marriage to a shoemaker named Ghinucci, by whom she had a daughter called Violante, and two sons. The other sister Camilla was about twenty-four years of age, fair beautiful and of a lofty spirit ; of singular modesty and good feeling, and with "a pair of eyes like two brilliant stars." Wandering one morning in the unfinished building she accidentally met the Duke who being struck with her beauty and manners next morning made a visit to the house of Martelli, and from hour to hour becoming more entangled he ultimately succeeded, and she sunk a half-reluctant victim to ambition if not a willing one to love. When in Rome for his coronation, Cosimo acknowledged this amongst other errors to the pope, who unhesitatingly urged him to do justice and avoid future sin by an immediate marriage, and this was accomplished on his return to Florence. Martelli being pre-

* *Adriani*, Lib. xxi., pp. 1510-1521. *Galluzzi*, Lib. iii^o, cap. vi., pp. 110-114. — *Annunziato*, Lib. xxxv^o, p. 550.

sent at the ceremony asked if the Duke wished it to be known; receiving an affirmative answer he immediately issued forth in a fine dress and appeared, what he really was, a gentleman of high birth. Showing himself in the *Mercato Nuovo*, then the principal resort of the nobility and richer citizens, he strutted about with unusual gravity; his brother-in-law Alamanno de Pazzi observed this, and addressing him by his nick-name exclaimed "Ho! Balencio! what bravery is this? What has happened to you to-day?" "What?" replied Martelli, "have you not heard?" "No." "Why" "I have married my daughter Camilla." "To whom?" "To whom!" repeated Martelli contemptuously, "Why, does not everybody know?" "I at least do not," rejoined Alamanno. "*To the Grand Duke Cosimo!*" "I wish you joy with all my heart," said Pazzi and instantly hurrying to the palace and requesting an audience congratulated the prince in a somewhat familiar tone on his niece's marriage. "*We have no relations but emperors, kings, and dukes,*" answered Cosimo while he bowed him contemptuously from his presence.

Antonio Martelli became a knight of San Stefano and Maria the shoemaker's wife was advanced in dignity (her husband having been previously murdered, as is said, by Cosimo's command) and then re-married to a Spanish merchant named Baldassare Suarez who being rich in possessions and character, was made a knight of San Stefano and subsequently filled high offices in Florence. The unlucky shoemaker's two sons were commanded to change their name to Martelli; their sister Violante after the Grand Duke Francesco's death became his brother the Grand Duke Ferdinand's mistress, and on his marriage, she was united to Giulio Ricci of Montepulciano. After a few years Ricci died and she returned to Florence, when Ferdinand, being tired of his wife Christina of Lorraine, blithely resumed his first amours and made secret visits through the new corridor, which gave him ingress to several of the adjoining houses.

The grand duchess was not blind or tame, wherefore addressing the Cavaliere Serguidi she said, "Go to Violante and tell her "from me to quit Florence within one hour, and not presume "to come within twenty miles of it or attempt to return with- "out my especial leave: this I conclude will be sufficient "warning, for she will not find me another Giovanna of "Austria" *.

By Camilla Martelli Cosimo had one illegitimate daughter, Virginia, whom he afterwards acknowledged as his own; but the marriage was secretly deplored by his family, complained of by the Archduchess Giovanna in her correspondence with Maximilian, and indignantly resented by the latter in a note which she imprudently showed to Cosimo, receiving from him a firm and dignified reply †. These causes of anger rendered Maximilian implacable, but the pontiff and Cosimo more resolute: Catherine of Medicis needing the pope's aid and proud of her race, promptly acknowledged the new title; Philip II. acquiesced as regarded Florence but denied that Siena could be included without injury to his feudal rights: by the Swiss and Duke of Savoy Cosimo's new rank was admitted and even Elizabeth of England cheerfully concurred: the Diet at Spire to whom Maximilian referred this question tried to arrange it amicably without taking any interest in the dispute, wherefore on seeing his supporters fall off the emperor for a while became more placable but soon broke out afresh at the suggestions of Alfonso: he entreated Cosimo to renounce the new dignity and submit to him, from whom he might expect higher honours, and roundly asserted that the Diet had even condemned it as prejudicial to the empire. This was false, for the Diet had

* Galluzzi, Lib. iii., cap. vi., p. 117. — Origine e Descendenza dei Medici, fol. 279, MS.—I have never seen all these details in print, but have always found the MS. correct where it could be compared with other known authors, and therefore have ventured to give

them. They at least show the belief and manners, the "*form and pressure of the time*," as they related to the Medici.

† Galluzzi, Lib. iii., cap. vi., pp. 118-120.

come to no conclusion; but Spain had procrastinated until the league between the Pope Venice and herself was terminated when the Spanish ambassador at Rome again protested. Pius V. became irritated and boldly defied Philip, declaring that both he and Cosimo well knew how to defend their acts, and the latter his dominions: the ambassador's proceeding was accompanied by every sign of royal displeasure and a report arose that Philip repenting his relinquishment of Siena intended to recover it by force of arms and make his natural brother Don John of Austria lord of that city. A reënforcement of the *Presidij* and new Italian levies gave some strength to this rumour, while Alfonso boasted of his power to bring down all the German Protestants upon the plains of Italy. Cosimo although well assured of safety by his spies at both courts, yet considered it wise to strengthen Grosseto and Pistoia which with Pisa had been already reconnoitred by Ferrarese officers*.

Aware that single-handed he could not resist Spain the Grand Duke resolved to take advantage of the general state of Europe and especially of France to defend himself. Peace had been made with the Huguenots and that kingdom enjoyed an apparent calm, but restless spirits still worked and bigotry was not extinguished, hardly cooled: for this reason Montmorency desired to turn the general wrath on an adversary whom all hated and most of them abhorred, and so give vent to the ill-humours that he foresaw would soon break out afresh in one shape or other. A league was accordingly proposed against Spain which was to be attacked in Flanders by France England and the Prince of Orange; the German Protestants were to combine and keep Maximilian in check; Savoy, Genoa, and if possible Florence, were to fall on the Spaniards in Northern Italy, and the conquest of Naples was to follow†. Genoa and

* Cini, Vita, Lib. viiiº, p. 497.

135.—Adriani, Lib. xxiº, pp. 1556 to

† Galluzzi, Lib. iiiº, cap. vi., pp. 132- 1562.

Corsica were offered to Cosimo as the price of his alliance, and money was demanded of him for the Prince of Orange as a pledge of his junction: he however knew the exhausted condition of France, the difficulty of effecting a permanent union between Catholic and Protestant, and foresaw that he should be ultimately sacrificed, yet availed himself of this overture to alarm Philip and discover his real intentions*. Cunning as Cosimo was he dealt with knaves as cunning as himself and received indefinite answers; but he created an alarm which was made evident by redoubled vigilance in watching all his movements while completing the defences of his frontier.

The "*Holy League*" as it was called, the suggestion of Cosimo, appeared in the form of a powerful armament under Don John of Austria as generalissimo, and the ecclesiastical general Marcantonio Colonna as second in command. Cosimo became anxious to join but was prevented by Philip on account of the titular dispute, yet he furnished twelve galleys, for six of which the pontiff allowed him 750 ducats a month each, the rest were at his own cost under Colonna's orders though immediately commanded by Alfonso d' Appiano†. Don John with the two Archdukes Rodolph and Ernest were met at Genoa by the Prince Regent of Tuscany who there received assurances that Philip's amity was undiminished towards Cosimo whatever the troubles in Flanders had compelled him to do for the sake of keeping terms with Austria ‡.

After this interview Don John of Austria sailed from Genoa and assembled the allied fleets at Messina whence he weighed anchor on the sixteenth of September 1571 with two hundred and nine light galleys, six galleasses and twenty-six other vessels of war. On board of this fleet, more than half of which was Venetian under Sebastiano Veniero, there were twenty-seven or

* Adriani, Lib. xxiº, pp. 1556 to 1562.

—Adriani, Lib. xxi., p. 1567.

—Ammirato, Lib. xxxvº, p. 550.

‡ Adriani, Lib. xxi., p. 1578.—Gal-

† Galluzzi, Lib. iii., cap. vii., p. 137.

luzzi, Lib. iiiº, cap. vii., p. 139.

twenty-eight thousand men of all classes and countries exclusive of mariners, but including about three thousand volunteers *. Giovan Andrea Doria commanded the right wing of fifty-four galleys under a green flag; Agostino Barbarigo an equal number on the left with a yellow flag, and Don John supported by his subordinate officers, seventy-one galleys distinguished by a blue flag in the centre. Two galleasses were stationed about a mile in advance of each squadron. The Turkish galleys to the number of two hundred and fifty, or three hundred, led by Ali Pacha, and drawn up in the form of a crescent were met by the Christians off the Gulf of Lepanto between Cephalonia and the main land of Greece near the *Curzolari* rocks or islands, the ancient *Echinades*. From a movement of the Christian fleet to gain space for forming the order of battle while issuing from a channel between the islands, the Turks inferred fear, and so hurried on with shouts to the combat. It was the seventh of October 1571 when this memorable combat began: on the allies' left the Venetian admiral after an obstinate resistance repulsed the attack, but assisted by the lofty galleasses, which stood like impregnable fortresses, battering down the adverse galleys as they passed them to the fight, for these vessels, new in naval warfare, and probably then used for the first time, astonished the Turks and were the incipient cause of victory. Although somewhat disordered by their terrible fire Ali dashed bravely on endeavouring to break the Christian line and double on the right wing while his own right cut the allies' left off from the shore which would probably have secured him the victory †. The latter partly succeeded though the general attempt was baffled, and after a long bloody and glorious action and the death of Ali and Barbarigo, the Turks were entirely defeated with the loss as was believed of twenty thousand killed and five thousand prisoners.

* Ammirato, Lib. xxxv°, p. 552.—
Cini, Lib. viii., p. 500.

† There has been much dispute about “breaking the line:” this, if the account be true, seems to be the earliest instance of it on record.

The allies lost between killed and wounded about six thousand men and liberated twelve thousand Christian slaves *.

This naval battle, the greatest fought in modern times until that period, was not followed up and produced no serious consequences as regarded the Turk; but the moral effect was considerable, and Italy probably escaped by it from immediate invasion if not conquest. Cosimo who lost a galley in the fight had reason to be proud of his own forecast and efforts to form this league, and sent his son to congratulate Pius IV. on the result; but Philip, who had ordered his brother to act only on the African coast, was so angry at having the whole naval force of his kingdom risked in a single encounter without advantage to Spain that Don John instead of reward received a severe reprimand for his victory! The glory and applause of all Europe however remained to console him †. This victory not having been improved by any further operations the League was soon dissolved, to the great satisfaction of Charles IX. of France, who as a firm ally of Turkey was displeased at its success and had strenuously opposed it. With such feelings he was more desirous than ever to accomplish Montmorency's plan, and sent a second envoy to seduce Cosimo from the side of Spain; but after the assurances of Philip's undiminished friendship the latter was immovable yet resolved to keep well with all parties, wherefore he sent Catherine a quantity of jewels which he held in pawn for a loan of 180,000 ducats, and simultaneously informed Philip II. of the whole negotiation ‡.

Like every man whose abilities and good fortune have raised him to distinction the Grand Duke of Tuscany was
A.D. 1572. assailed at all points by his enemies; no occasion was lost, and calumny even went so far as to accuse him of burning the Venetian arsenal! He had also to undeceive king Philip,

* Muratori, *Annali*.—Botta, *Lib. xiii*º, p. 255.—Cini, *Lib. viii*º, p. 501.—*Ammirato, Lib. xxxv*º, p. 551.

† This is not the only "untoward

event" on that coast for which the admiral has been unjustly censured.

‡ Cini, *Lib. viii*º, pp. 505-7.—Adriani, *Lib. xxii*º, pp. 6, 10, 32.

who began to suspect him of treacherous designs against Milan in concert with France ; and lastly to soothe the pope himself whose suspicions were awakened by reports of his favouring the Huguenots. Cosimo was capable of anything ; but these accusations were at variance with his feelings habits and general policy and could serve no immediate interest, wherefore he had little difficulty in clearing himself. His actions were all calculated ; he did nothing wantonly ; but complained to Philip that he was continually placed on his defence against calumnies which rose like hydras' heads and in such a way that no reputation could withstand them *.

Pius V. died much regretted in Rome on the first of May 1572 : the people flocked in crowds to touch his remains with garlands and chaplets and to tear off portions of his raiment : he was cruel from excess of bigotry in religious affairs, but otherwise simple charitable and compassionate, an enemy to nepotism, and so deeply impressed with the dignity of his office as to be peculiarly severe and haughty to every Christian potentate except Cosimo de' Medici. He fulfilled his prophecy ; when elected, he was told that all " Rome was sorry : " "*They will be more so when I die,*" said he ; and so it happened.

The two great parties in conclave were those of Pius IV. and Pius V., for that of Farnese had considerably diminished, and Cosimo by means of his son Ferdinand who possessed considerable talents and influence, contrived to make them unite in electing Cardinal Buoncompagni a man who owed all his success in life to Cosimo and had ever been devoted to the Medici. He assumed the pontificate on the thirteenth of May 1572 under the name of Gregory XIII. and declared his intention of following the traces of his predecessor : to Cosimo he gave notice that secretly he should be favoured but not to marvel if he refrained from useless exhibitions of goodwill †.

* Galluzzi, Lib. iii., cap. vii., p. 152. † Ammirato, Lib. xxxv°, p. 556.—
—Ammirato, Lib. xxxv., p. 558.— Galluzzi, Lib. iii°, cap. vii°, p. 158.
Adriani, Lib. xxii°, p. 32.

Intelligence of the fearful massacre of Saint Bartholomew on the twenty-fourth of August 1572 by the infidels' friend and ally Charles IX., burst suddenly upon Italy and is said to have occasioned as much joy as the victory of Lepanto: it was the same feeling, but mingled in the latter case with danger heroism and military glory, coupled with a certain sense of national safety that changed and exalted its real character: the former was pure faction and fanaticism! The pope celebrated this diabolical act with public rejoicing; Cosimo followed the example and despatched an ambassador extraordinary to congratulate his queenly cousin and her son on their successful slaughter of forty thousand Protestants in the name of Christ! "*I did not come to bring peace into the world but a sword!*" said our Saviour. He knew mankind and all the perverseness of human nature, and he foresaw the consequences: but he also foresaw the end*.

The conduct of Philip II. arising as it did from fear and selfish interests, had embarrassed the League, cramped
 A.D. 1573. all naval operations, and placed the allies in a position of expense and danger; wherefore Venice withdrew in disgust and aided by France made peace with Turkey, to the dismay of Spain and Austria and the pontiff's deep indignation. Nor were the courts of Madrid and Vienna less alarmed at the extension of French influence by Henry of Anjou's acquisition of Poland chiefly through the sultan's aid, an event that foreboded evil to both, for a league between that kingdom, Venice, England, and the Prince of Orange, supported by the sultan and perhaps some of the German Protestants, was now apprehended, and showed the necessity of securing their friends: amongst these the Grand Duke of Tuscany was of most consequence in power talents and influence; wherefore an immediate recognition of the long-disputed title was promised and every means adopted to conciliate him.

* Botta, Lib. xii., p. 270.—Galluzzi, Lib. xxxv., p. 558.—Adriani, Lib. Lib. iii., cap. viii., p. 169.—Ammirato, xxii°, p. 46.

The Counts of Pitigliano had created some further troubles by their disputes, which involving Pope Gregory, Cosimo, and the Farnesi, nearly plunged Tuscany in war, and some revolutionary movements at Genoa, in which Cosimo was vainly solicited to take a part, did not tend to tranquillity. These movements favoured democracy against nobility, which latter since Andrea Doria's revolution had governed and closely connected itself with Spain not only by inclination but a far more stringent tie, a debt of 2,000,000 of ducats due from that crown. The nobles implored Philip's aid, and the presence of his minister with the opportune arrival of Don Juan and his victorious fleet succeeded in restoring order *. Cosimo was much too prudent to involve Florence in these dissensions although the democracy endeavoured to tempt him by a glimpse of Genoese sovereignty: his earthly course was nearly run, and from vast mental labour and more irregular living as a widower, his health began rapidly to decline. Sporting of every description and excess in all kinds of athletic exercises contributed to produce evil effects even on a remarkably robust frame, and the violent medicines then in use assisted his decay. He had been long subject to gout, a prevailing illness in those days, and also showed symptoms of apoplexy which nearly killed him in 1572. The next summer he was again violently attacked by paralysis, but his intellect remained untouched. An almost unceasing drowsiness possessed him until the twenty-first of April 1574 when a slight access of fever finished his eventful days.

A.D. 1574.

Cosimo's body arrayed in the grand-ducal robes, was first exposed in one of the palace chambers and then privately interred in the splendid mausoleum of his race; but a public burial was subsequently ordered and a waxen image substituted for the corpse; Pietro Vettori delivered a funeral oration at the palace, and Adriani another in the church of San Lorenzo.

Cosimo di Giovanni de' Medici died at the early age of fifty-

* Galluzzi, Lib. iii°, cap. viii°, pp. 177 to 183.

five after a reign of thirty-eight years, twenty-eight of which he ruled alone. He left three legitimate sons; Don Francesco his heir, the Cardinal Don Ferdinand, and Don Pietro; besides one daughter, Isabella, married to Paulo Giordano Orsini Duke of Bracciano: also a natural son called Giovanni, by Eleonora degli Albizzi; and a daughter, Virginia, by Camilla Martelli, but born before wedlock. Cosimo possessed a fine robust form and ruddy complexion with a severe and haughty aspect; a man of few words, but grave acute and impressive in thought and language: he wrote much, delighted in listening to history, encouraged historians, and was secret and diligent beyond all cotemporary princes. He ascended the throne in blood; partly from necessity, partly from a vindictive disposition; but the leading marks of his character were profound sagacity, deep dissimulation, impenetrable darkness, extreme caution; patience, resolution, rigour and indomitable perseverance. He was cruel, implacable, and rigid in every exaction; checking at no means to gain his ends, and sacrificing everybody to his personal interests. He was an iron-handed ruler, but maintained both law and justice in everything unconnected with the state: he found the country exhausted, weak, and miserable; he left it industrious active and powerful: he laid heavy and vexatious burdens on the people, but he supplied the strength to bear them. After the peace of 1559 he discharged every debt that had been contracted in Genoa and Flanders, altogether exceeding 1,000,000 of ducats: he then put the national defences into perfect order, and built more where necessary, amongst which, Heliopolis or La Citta del Sole, Sasso di Simone on the Urbino frontier, and San Martino in Mugello have already been noticed: he improved the fortifications of Grosseto Montalcino and Radicofani, erected the beautiful citadel of Siena, completed the defences and harbour of Porto Ferraio, built and peopled the town and began to enlarge the port of Leghorn ere he died*.

* Ammirato, Lib. xxxv. and xxxii., pp. 466-538.—Adriani, Lib. xviii., p. 1292.

He moreover completed this sea line of defence by a chain of watch-towers connected by cavalry patrols: every city and most of the principal towns were fortified, and a well-disciplined militia of thirty-six thousand men under distinguished officers was always ready for the field. They were all volunteers, paid and privileged by certain honours and exemptions, and could be concentrated on any given point within a week, while at Pisa a coast guard of four hundred light horse were continually on the alert and attentive to signals from the several watch-towers. The possession of Porto Ferraio, one of the finest harbours in Europe and for the galleys of that day invaluable, first induced Cosimo to create a defensive navy that might also act against the infidels, and with such vigour did he proceed that between his own galleys and those of San Stefano no less than sixteen vessels were actually afloat or ready for immediate service at his death. One galley was destroyed at Lepanto and one had been taken some years before by the Venetians while acting in the service of another power; for the squadron was kept in constant activity in the Levant and on the Barbary shore, and frequently distinguished itself*.

The ordinary revenues of the Grand Duchy under Cosimo's management were estimated at 1,100,000 ducats, 700,000 of which he relinquished with the government to Francesco; and the population of the Florentine state alone was about seven hundred thousand, that of the Senese dominion not a seventh of this number, an amount which in its flourishing days, before the great pestilence of 1348, the city of Siena alone is said to have nearly contained within its walls and suburbs! The improvement of Pisa and its district by Cosimo's draining embanking and re-peopling the whole state, besides his liberal encouragement of commerce and manufactures, was immense! He found the place a desert, it was no longer a city: scarcely seven thousand sickly wretches remained to tell its tale:

* *Pregii de' Toscani, passim.*

its halls were desolate, its palaces decayed, grass grew rankly in the untrodden streets ; sickness, misery, and poverty were cowering and shivering under the cold decay of marble palaces and ruined porticos, and a melancholy silence filled the scene. But at Cosimo's death two-and-twenty thousand industrious souls enlivened the river and its banks and with a thriving and cheerful aspect exhibited the faint but pleasing resemblance of ancient republican activity. The free port of Leghorn then, as now, afforded a continual stimulus to Tuscan enterprise and industry, while the plains of Siena until utterly ruined, supplied the first necessities of life, and for a while rendered Tuscany nearly independent of the stranger. All these benefits cover many crimes, they raised Cosimo's reputation, perhaps too high in the world's opinion, and his power and riches were sometimes unduly magnified : yet there are few examples of so small a state suddenly swelling up to such importance and influence amongst surrounding monarchies. Circumstances no doubt were favourable but an ordinary man would not have known how to wield them ; Cosimo made them his own, and while he raised himself he saved his country from becoming like Milan a mere province of the Spanish monarchy ; on the contrary his friendship became essential to Spain ; his talents had made it so, and for this too he was courted by France : he startled one and governed three popes successively, two of whom he elected : he was feared by the emperor and Venetians, for he had great powers of injury, possessed the secrets of all, and was courted by all ; and if he placed himself too much in the power of Spain by accepting Siena as a fief of that crown he at least followed his inclination and what he believed his interest ; and it would have been so had the country not been already ruined. It was Cosimo's personal qualities alone that saved Florence from becoming the mere foot-ball of transalpine sovereigns, and restored her if not to her old republican dignity, at least to a respectable independence, with powers sufficient to main-

tain her sovereign's influence in Europe. The possession of Siena united Cosimo more firmly with that family to which he was mainly indebted and with which he aspired to connect himself by domestic ties : in this he ultimately succeeded, yet without any other beneficial consequences than a more intimate mixture of the Medici with the blood-royal of Europe generally. But cunning, patience, secrecy, spies, the dagger and the bowl, were some of the most efficient instruments of Cosimo's personal safety and success : that constant vigilance necessary to avoid the snares of his enemies frequently made him acquainted with machinations against others whose good-will he gained by their disclosure, while he gradually continued to acquire information until the secrets of every European court were familiar to him. His letter to Captain Giovanni Oradini extracted from the annals of the society of the "*Colombaia*" and published in Rosini's novel of "*Luisa Strozzi*," is the copy of a circular of which there is at least one more extant on the same subject (for Cosimo trusted not to a single executioner) and shows how coolly and methodically he planned his assassinations, and what pains he took to impress on the agent's mind that by being thus employed he was peculiarly honoured with his sovereign's confidence, when perhaps several others were served with copies of the same letter. Both epistles run nearly thus :—

" Valorous and dear Sir,—Every good prince should wish
" for three things above all others ; namely, to preserve his
" honour, and his government, and to have an opportunity of
" proving his servants in order to gratify and reward them.
" To us it appears that by the arrival of Piero Strozzi we shall
" have occasion to think of two of them : of the first because
" it seems too disgraceful that this insolent man should come
" to Siena and remain, too much to our own dishonour, under
" our eyes. Wherefore we have considered about executing
" two things : one is to make use of every means for removing

“ this nuisance ; the other to prove our faithful friends and
“ servants and afford ourselves an opportunity of benefiting
“ them if they serve us well in this business ; because touching
“ the third object ; that of preserving the state ; it must not
“ for a moment be supposed that he has power to hurt it, see-
“ ing that we have taken especial care to have everything fully
“ secured. In order therefore to execute this our intention
“ we are sure that everybody must have some confidential
“ friend who may find the means (going to Siena for this pur-
“ pose) by the shot of an arquebuse, or in any other way that
“ you may deem more effective, remove from our sight this
“ arrogant man ; and implicitly confiding in your willingness to
“ serve us we have determined to propose this to you that you
“ may seek out two persons whom you can trust ; but we would
“ wish them to be foreigners, or rebels, or exiles from our
“ dominions who offering themselves in Siena for soldiers, or
“ in any better way, might by seizing on a good opportunity
“ either with an arquebuse or something else put this man to
“ death ; which if they do you may assure them 10,000 crowns
“ besides our good favour, and rank and privileges according as
“ you choose to promise them ; which being done shall on the
“ honour of a prince be executed by us without delay, doubt, or
“ scruple, in the fullest manner. And as regards yourself we
“ propose first to double our good graces, and secondly all that
“ you can possibly desire for your honour and profit, knowing
“ that with you there is no need of offering money, because
“ offering all that may be convenient to you, along with our
“ good grace, you may largely promise yourself from us as much
“ as may be necessary for your interest, your honour and your
“ convenience. We cannot more than we have already done
“ charge and impress you with our great desire for this thing,
“ because it appearing to us that our honour is affected, and
“ valuing that above everything else, you may conceive how
“ much we wish for it : it is many years that he has been an

“ exile and though we might have hurt him very often we never
“ thought of doing so ; but now that he arrogantly chooses to
“ compete with us and wants to show himself of some conse-
“ quence under our very eyes ; now I say ; it appears to us that
“ he is seeking to offend our honour, and therefore we wish to
“ prove our friends and servants. Try therefore to find two
“ at least of those that you think most fitted for such a deed
“ and see that you persuade them to undertake it by ordering
“ them what pay you may deem necessary to keep them on the
“ spot, or wherever you may go to for the purpose, and we will
“ reimburse you for all that you give them ; or we will send
“ you the means when we hear from you to that effect, as may
“ best suit you. We must warn you that the keeping this trans-
“ action a secret is of the greatest consequence, but should any
“ of them discover it to Piero it will not signify on that account,
“ but only on account of those that have to execute it. As
“ regards the knowing the one from the other or from any
“ other person that may be employed in this affair ; all *that* we
“ leave to your own judgment, and this our letter may remain
“ with you, or you may burn it ; which you please ; but let it
“ not fall into other hands than your own, unless to animate any
“ of those whom you employ to do the thing. We will now
“ therefore say no more, believing that we have fully explained
“ our intentions, and we hope to remain satisfied with your
“ work, desiring the thing so much as we do. You will give us
“ a particular account of what is done, telling us the names
“ of the people. Send one or more if there are more, and
“ without seeming to speak to us or coming to us for such a
“ purpose answer us in your own hand, as we alone and the
“ secretary who writes this, shall see it and be cognizant of the
“ transaction, and God preserve you. From Florence 5th
“ January 1553. (Signed) IL DUCA DI FIRENZE ”*.

* The signature of another original letter about this business seen by the author is at top in the usual manner of royal signatures.

As regards this letter it should be considered, first, that the life of man even by assassination was then lightly thought of, few who deemed their honour injured having much scruple about the manner of revenge; secondly that a conspiracy to put Cosimo to death had been already detected at Mirandola of which Piero Strozzi was supposed, whether truly or not, to be cognizant, but certainly was chief of the exiles who formed it; and lastly that as a Florentine rebel any man might legally have put him to death. Cosimo however was indifferent about excuses and had few scruples where his safety or interests were threatened: yet when we consider how he spurned the dying republic in its final struggle and stood an absolute monarch on its corpse; how he subdued the jarring cries of liberty, fettered speech, and even imprisoned thought; we must believe that his character, dark and gloomy as it was, has received a deeper tinge from the secret whispers and open vituperations of those domestic and foreign enemies whom he crushed and mastered. Nor can we without free access to the Medician archives ascertain the precise tone of colouring which ought in justice to be given to his portrait: his talents and good fortune dazzled many; his power and fierceness awed more, and his crimes shocked but few people beyond the immediate victims of his cruelty. The historians of that day wrote under his eye and protection and can scarcely be trusted for his true character; Segni flattered him to his face and received an indirect rebuke; Varchi spares him, and could hardly censure Cosimo in a work which he was in the habit of personally reading to him, and which finishes at the first year of his reign; Ammirato says little in his history, and the biographers of princes are always eulogists. Galluzzi composed his work under the auspices of an Austrian and had full access to every Medician document, but though generally deemed authentic he never cites authorities, he wrote for an absolute monarch, and probably with the habitual indulgence which in such circumstances may be supposed likely to

influence human judgment in the examination of royal crimes and errors. Leopold was a singular exception, but the cause of all monarchs is essentially one, and with wide differences amongst them their general feeling is identical: few authors under the influence of despotism however liberal, can write with unfettered thought, or fearlessly send forth those bold and venturous truths so becoming to human dignity.

One of Cosimo's most important operations was the order he introduced into public finance and especially the administration of municipal revenues or "*Comunità*:" each of these corporations still managed its own local funds with all the independence originally reserved to it on coming under Florentine rule; they were employed in the necessary expenses of the district and in alleviating their portion of general taxation, but under the supervision of a magistracy called *The Five of the County and District* who were receivers of all government taxation and prevented any flagrant abuse of local revenue. Cosimo in the year 1549 resolved to appropriate to the public service all surplus income from the several "*Comunità*" and ordered general deposits to be made of what exceeded the ordinary local outlay, so that the inhabitants could still raise but no longer freely control their municipal revenue. In 1551 he reduced all these communities under the single administration of nine officers called *The nine Conservators of the Jurisdiction and Dominion of Florence*, which board was itself ultimately controlled by one minister through whom the sovereign directly acted on the local purse of every corporation in Tuscany.

As he facilitated trading and encouraged industry a considerable revenue was raised with comparative ease but extreme vexation in its details, as will be hereafter shown. By the improvement of commerce and manufactures the people were enabled to pay, for republican energy was not yet extinct; but when an attempt was made to apply this system to the devastated war-worn Siena it utterly failed, the population of the

Maremma still continued to dwindle and the air became more and more deadly. Colonies from Brescia and Friuli were established at Massa Marittima in 1561 but dispersed in two years notwithstanding all the privileges and exemptions they enjoyed, and a Greek settlement in the Island of Giglio had no better fortune: Cosimo endeavoured to revive the commerce of Grosseto by excavating a canal to Castiglione della Pescaia the port of that city, but an official meddling with internal trade and foreign commerce, both left unfettered by the Senese republic, soon destroyed every remnant of former energy. The cultivation of grain was nearly abandoned; pasture succeeded and was erroneously fostered by Cosimo: the cattle were constantly injuring the drains; the fishery of the lake or marsh of Castiglione was farmed out, and the additional works deemed necessary to preserve the fish during summer by retaining the waters, swamped still more land and increased the pestilence.

Cosimo's labours in the Pisan district were more fortunate both in drainage and trade, and that city became the residence of many nations: Greeks, Jews, Portuguese, Ragusians, Genoese and other mercantile people held establishments there, and had not his exertions been cramped by ecclesiastical intolerance, which allowed of no religious rites unsanctioned by the Council of Florence under Eugenius IV, there would probably have been a flourishing Greek colony in that deserted city. No period could have been more favourable for reviving Florentine industry than that of Cosimo's domination and few princes could show more sagacity in taking advantage of it: the vigour and buoyancy imparted by free institutions had languished under misfortune and would have died by the influence of despotism had not the vigour of the prince, a child of the Republic, supported and restored them. He perceived the necessity of leaving commerce as free as his financial necessities would permit, and seized the fair occasion which then presented itself for attracting much of the scattered European

trade to Florence. Every species of industry found peace, justice, security, and sovereign protection under Cosimo, and comparative affluence generally filled the Florentine states while most other parts were still suffering. The struggles of Spain and Flanders, her quarrels with France, the latter's civil wars and squabbles with the house of Austria, had injured commerce throughout all those states and rendered them dependent on Italy for many manufactured articles, especially wool and silk. It has been said that Cosimo availed himself of this to supply France and Spain, but he went further and stretched his commerce across the Atlantic and Indian Oceans to the Spanish colonies, the Brazils, the Portuguese settlements in India, and even to distant China. From Spain and Portugal he had free admission to all their colonies as early as 1566, by treaty with the former, and especial encouragement from the latter: the result was a sudden and incredibly rapid increase of the cloth trade which far outstripped the most busy periods of the Republic: in 1575 this amounted to the value of 2,000,000 of ducats, which at 30 ducats for one piece of cloth would make from sixty-six to sixty-seven thousand pieces as the produce of that year's industry in Florence alone! Silks, cloth of gold and other less bulky but more valuable articles, sold freely in America and tempted many Florentines to become carriers with mercantile establishments in Brazil India and China. Nor did Cosimo himself refrain from private trade, but on the contrary had two galleons in constant activity either on his own personal account or let to other merchants*. At Pisa he introduced the Sicilian art of working in coral as well as the manufacture of glass mirrors and vases from Venice, whence he had seduced some of the "*Murano*" workmen. Don Francesco imbibed all these tastes and carried them further even than Cosimo: in his laboratory was first discovered the method of melting rock-

* Galluzzi, Lib. iii., cap. x.

crystal, and Francesco himself was distinguished for his taste and skill in forming vases of this material : he was the first in Europe to attempt the manufacture of porcelain in imitation of the Chinese ware but never succeeded in equalling it. The art of Florentine mosaic called "*Pietre Dure*" or "*Commesso*," was first introduced in 1568, through a young French artist from Rome who had made some progress in its acquirement. Francesco surpassed Cosimo in science, who however often shared his chemical labours and between them as is said, sprang to light the formidable bomb-shell, but they never succeeded in making it burst at a given moment. The Grand Duke proposed to both Philip II. and Don John of Austria that it should be used in war, but the Spanish engineers considered it more likely to do mischief to friends than enemies. Such was the first estimate of an instrument which has since become the most efficient and destructive in modern tactics!

An inherent taste for literature and art pervaded the whole race of Medici, and Cosimo although uneducated was fully imbued with it : throughout his whole reign men of genius were amply encouraged and his veneration for Michelangelo has already been noticed : but besides him, Vasari, Cellini, Giovanni da Bologna, Buontalenti, and other artists partook of this liberality, and the historians Varchi, Adriani, and the elder Ammirato were especially favoured. He it was who instituted the Florentine Academy of painting which like other analogous establishments began after that art and sculpture had reached their meridian altitude and were beginning to decline. Buonarruoti was the first president of the Florentine Academy ; all its second generation of members attempted to imitate him but without his inspiration, and therefore became mere copiers and mannerists : he himself declared that he could not be imitated, and that "*those who follow would ever be behind.*" When Buonarruoti died, his genius slept with him, and no Florentine has yet awakened it ! Since then they have searched in darkness

and lost their way, or sleeping like Sancho in their saddle, have allowed their beast to be slipped from under them by other nations. The Florentine Academy soon became celebrated because it contained, besides architects, about eighty sculptors and painters of known eminence, men who had been educated by some of the greatest artists; but when these died off, whom did it produce to sustain the pictorial reputation, far less the sculptural fame of Florence? The modern race bask languidly in ancestral glory and fancy it their own, while they regard unmoved the efforts of other nations who have far outstripped them, and as they rarely travel remain ignorant of transalpine genius. Still there is much dormant talent among the Florentines, and it would soon awaken were it not for their own languor and a lamentable absence of encouragement.

Cosimo's reputation rose high on the establishment of this school, and it was still further augmented by a discovery made in his laboratory of the mode of tempering steel so as to cut porphyry, until then a lost art: neither was he much behind his namesake in adorning the country with architectural works, such as the beautiful bridge of the Trinity, the magnificent gardens of Boboli, much of the Palazzo Pitti, the villas of Petraia and Cerreto, and the fine church and dwellings of the order of San Stefano at Pisa. He also established a botanical garden, encouraged the introduction of exotic plants, and made zoological collections from every part of the world. The library of San Lorenzo was repaired and completed by him; he rebound its manuscripts, deputed learned men to seek for more, purchased the Cardinal of Carpi's valuable library, and was presented by several of the Tuscan abbeys and convents with rare and beautiful volumes. It would have been well if Cosimo's deference for Rome had allowed him to follow his natural inclination to the arts in connection with the press; but papal support was too important to be neglected for such pursuits. The catalogue sent abroad by Paul IV, modified as it was by the

Duke, almost ruined the Florentine printers; nor was the mild pontificate of Pius sufficient to restore it, because none would invest money in a dangerous and doubtful business which might any day be suddenly annihilated by the council then assembled at Trent. Thus driven from Italy by the flaming sword of the Vatican the art of printing took refuge in more congenial climes, and Germany Savoy and Switzerland received the fugitive. The celebrated printer Torrentino retired to Savoy at the invitation of that Duke, but Giunti and others had the resolution to remain under the censorship of a Dominican Inquisitor who vexed them with visits, citations, prosecutions, and officious attempts to confine them, even to the original catalogue of Paul IV ere it was modified by Cosimo *. Such were the "good old times" of modern Italy!

Cosimo was singularly attached to his native tongue and may justly lay claim to the honour of founding the Florentine Academy of Literature: this celebrated body originally sprung from the meeting of a few young gentlemen in November 1540 at the house of *Giovanni Mazzuoli* generally called "*Stradino*," with the object of creating a small society amongst themselves for literary discussions. They established periodical assemblies and subsequently formed themselves into an Academy which according to the whimsical fashion of the time assumed the somewhat obscure appellation of the "*Umidi*," as emblematic of the literary fruits expected to spring from their influence like those of the earth from its natural moisture. In allusion to this name each of the original members assumed a particular denomination, by which some were better known than by that of their family, such as "*L'Umoroso*," "*il Gelato*," "*il Frigido*," "*l'Annacquato*," "*Lo Spumoso*," "*Il Lasca*" (the novelist), "*il Torbido*," "*il Pantanoso*," and so forth. Being at first without order they elected Goro della Pieve as a provisional president who on certain days lectured at the house of the

* Galluzzi, Lib. iii., cap. x.

Padre "*Stradino*." Two members were directed to form a code of laws and regulations, who amongst other things decided that a sonnet from Petrarca should be read twice a week at their meetings: their numbers were soon augmented by the reception of some of the most distinguished men, and a resolution was passed to read all the Latin authors publicly in the Tuscan language, leaving it to the reader's care to find the translation; by this means they expected in time to reduce the whole mass of classic literature into the vulgar tongue. In February 1541 a code of regulations was completed and by the Duke's wish their name was changed to that of "*Accademia Fiorentina*." Many privileges were granted to this body which under Cosimo's auspices now assumed the character of a corporation. In the first general meeting under the new name their president was styled "*Consul of the Florentine Academy and Rector General of the Studio and University of Florence*." The jurisdiction rights and privileges of this last officer were transferred to him, and they were considerable; they included authority over all doctors, scholars, professors, and other persons belonging to those establishments; over booksellers and writers in everything connected with them, and over the academicians themselves, with magisterial power exempt from the interference of any other tribunal. The consul had also a seat in the Council of Two Hundred, took precedence of every other magistrate and ranked immediately after the counsellors of state. Thus did Cosimo contrive, even in the act of nobly patronising it, to transform this self-instituted and free literary club into a public magistracy dependent on the government and entirely under his own control; and it was effectually prevented from ever becoming dangerous to the state as a political engine, because the members were no longer free agents but one disciplined official body under a chief to whom they were responsible, although annually elected by themselves*.

* Notizie Letterarie ed Istoriche dell' Accademia Fiorentina da Jacopo Rilli, Consolo.

All this was however considered honourable and opposed no obstacle to their literary labours ; these now became duties, including an encouragement of the love and study of science and letters by original essays, expositions of authors, and translations from every other language into the Tuscan tongue. This academy was soon celebrated throughout Europe, because great talents and the voluntary spirit of improvement were already working, and Cosimo removed the bushel from the light while over the rising flame he gave his hand to science. But the germ of literature like that of liberty must be already full and swelling ere a royal proclamation can call it into existence ! Institutions of this nature have rarely *produced* great men ; they are the offspring, not the parents of science literature and the fine arts ; and if their corporate nature acts as a centre for scattered particles and a test of genius, it is often the generator of an exclusive spirit, partiality, negligence, and frequently injustice. Nevertheless this exaltation of letters and science is honourable to Cosimo's memory, but it is sad to acknowledge that one so alive to the beauty of intellect, the charms of literature, the fascination of poetry and arts, and the utility of science, who encouraged with an open hand and benign aspect everything that is supposed to contribute to human civilization, should himself be an example, terribly conspicuous, of the worst vices of barbarians without their excuse, and but few if any of their virtues !

Cosimo was intent on restoring the Tuscan language to its original purity and in a letter to the consul for 1572 complains of its being much corrupted and becoming daily more so ; he therefore commands him to have an easy short and popular work composed on the rules of their native tongue and to confide the execution of it to Baccio Barbadori, Bernardo Davanzati, the celebrated translator of Tacitus, Vincenzo Alamanni, Giovambatista Cini, his subsequent biographer, and the historian Adriani. With similar views but after long negotiations and

great difficulty he succeeded in procuring the papal sanction for publishing a correct edition of Boccaccio's *Decameron* a work whose wit and style can scarcely compensate our more rigid morality for its excessive indecency, a remark applicable to all the old Italian novelists, in whom the absence of delicacy presents but a sorry picture of the manners, and modesty of colloquial intercourse between the sexes in that age and country. It is true that Boccaccio himself became ashamed of his work and would have destroyed every copy of it, but too late; it had already taken deep root in the world and still lives to delight and disgust us. This indelicacy of female manners continued even in Cosimo's day; the custom of women laying high bets on the chance of being delivered of a girl or a boy was so common and mischievous both as regarded the amount and the frauds that were practised by the substitution of other children for those really born, that it called for legislative interference. By a proclamation of the sixth of June 1550 the Duke declared all such wagers illegal unless made with the husband's consent after their amount had been declared before a judge sanctioned by him; and to this public process the ladies to their credit were not disposed to submit. The general extravagance in the dress of all ranks and both sexes had early called for Cosimo's interference by a law of the nineteenth of October 1546. In the preamble to this he tells his subjects that he perceives how both men and women had departed from every decent and respectable manner of life, and that universal and particular evil arose from the excessive and superfluous expense of dress; that he had long waited for the rich man's reason and the poor man's poverty to teach them both moderation, and still seeing that neither one nor the other put bounds to their extravagance but on the contrary were continually augmenting it, he was compelled both for public and private benefit to restrain them by law; wherefore with the opinion of his counsellors and wisest citi-

zens he commanded that thenceforth no married woman or girl of Florence or the contado, or any others occasionally living there of whatever rank or condition, should wear jewels, pearls, fine stones, amber, glass, ivory, or mother of pearl, except in chaplets and rosaries, and in these not beyond the value of four golden crowns*. That they should wear no gold, silver, tinsel, gilt or plated ornaments except in chains necklaces and ribbons or head wreaths, which might be worn to any amount provided they were not enamelled. Rings of pearls and precious stones were permitted, but restricted to two whose united value was not to exceed 250 crowns. The value of each wreath was confined to a crown and one only allowed for each woman. Knives forks and spoons of silver were permitted, as were bracelets buttons clasps and buckles of that metal provided they were not enamelled or used for waistbands, which however might be made of gold or silver cloth not costing more than five crowns. Furs of all the finer kinds, high and low velvets of any colour, brocaded cloths with nap, tabbies, garlands, bracelets or other ornaments of amber-paste were interdicted. No musk was suffered, nor perfumed gloves exceeding four crowns the pair; nor plumes in hat or cap; nor were the women allowed to wear riding-hoods, cloaks, or riding-habits of silk or prohibited furs; but of cloth, camlet, and such fabrics. Certain specified trimmings and similar ornaments were forbidden; but ladies were permitted to cut such inventions to their fancy provided that no more than about two yards and a half of cloth were used for each trimming. No gold, silver, silk, or embroidery was to be used for gowns, ornaments, shifts, kerchiefs or tuckers, nor in other portions of the dress; nor in lace nor ribbons with any kind of work. Nor were such articles permitted even as wedding presents, white thread alone being licensed for these ornaments.

* Something less than as many pounds value for each crown, weight for weight, sterling of our present money, the metal being perhaps about half a sovereign.

The expense of dress-making was strictly regulated as regarded the wearer ; no pair of sleeves was to cost beyond three crowns, aprons four crowns, caps three crowns, ruffs three crowns, shifts the same, kerchiefs a quarter of a crown and pocket-handkerchiefs a crown ; it must therefore be allowed that according to our present habits Cosimo gave considerable latitude to the expenditure of his female subjects on their dress, and this may afford some idea of the magnitude of their previous extravagance*.

The men were likewise forbidden to wear either high or low velvets, napped cloth brocade, or cloth stockings lined, banded, or bound with anything but taffety ; or embroidered vests, or any other clothes cut or carved in patterns ; but without meaning to prevent them from forming their trimmings as they pleased, provided that no more than about two yards and a half of cloth were used for each set. Those citizens who were eligible for office and above eighteen years old, he ordered to wear the "*Lucco*" lined with cloth or unprohibited furs ; or else long civic cloaks according to the existing custom : any one not complying during the period of elections to public magistracies, was deemed to have forfeited his eligibility for a time equal to that of his neglect, and his billet was to be torn up as if he had been "*a specchio*," besides disqualification for any other office even of the trades. Infants of either sex while being carried to the baptismal font were not to have dresses of more than six crowns in value exclusive of the mantle, which was not to be of gold or silver cloth, but simple, short, and trimmed with cloth alone ; and as many gold or silver necklaces as their parents pleased, but no enamel. Neither men, matrons, nor girls were allowed to caparison their horses with silk and velvet, but with

* There are many articles of dress and manufactures mentioned in the law wholly unintelligible to a foreigner and from being obsolete probably to

natives ; indeed several of the above translations are given with considerable doubt about their accuracy, as applied to modern dress.

cloth bordered by the finer material, provided that it was not brocaded. These regulations were for the upper class of citizens eligible to civic honours, with their wives and daughters : those of lower rank were not suffered to wear the above-mentioned articles or silks at any price, with the following exceptions. Females might wear a ring of five crowns' value and no more; a gold or silver chaplet of one crown in value, a rosary for the neck of silver or silver gilt not exceeding two crowns. Knives, forks, and spoons of silver, and clasps and buttons of the same at any price they pleased, and both sexes might wear silk or taffety sashes worth a crown. Those citizens paying direct taxes, but ineligible to office, were permitted the further privilege of wearing a golden ring of twenty-five crowns' value, a chain of gold at the same price, a necklace of gold or silver beads costing ten crowns, and a sash or belt of silk or gold cloth at three crowns, besides the privilege of striping their garments with any kind of silk they pleased except velvets or brocades, and restricting themselves to two yards for each trimming. Notaries with their wives and daughters were included in this class, and the peasantry were forbidden to wear any article of dress denied to those not eligible for public office ; also camlets, silks as dress or trimming, or silk bands ; but the women might wear a ring of any material not exceeding the value of a crown. They might have silk cords, nets, and ribbons for their hair, but crimson cloth was interdicted to both sexes except for caps.

Silk dresses of any kind were denied to women of the town, but they could adorn themselves with as much gold, silver, and jewels as they pleased and were enjoined to carry a veil, kerchief, or napkin on their head bordered with yellow an inch broad, or else to wear it in some other conspicuous part of their dress, so that they might be avoided by modest women ! A penalty of ten golden crowns was attached to every breach of this law and offenders were placed under the especial care of the

"*Eight*," the Conservators of the Laws, and the "Officers of Decency." Any other person for a breach of these orders incurred a fine of ten crowns for the first offence, double for the second, and was afterwards punished at the judge's discretion; but fathers, brothers, husbands, or guardians, were held answerable for individuals of both sexes under eighteen years old. Tailors, mantua-makers, and workwomen of all kinds who should infringe such regulations were to be fined five crowns for the first offence, ten for the second; and for the third to male offenders, two strokes of that torture called the "*Corda*," in addition; but for females, public exposure in the pillory crowned with a mitre, all of which could be avoided by divulging the name of their employer. The peasantry were fined four crowns for the first offence, and so on like the others with corporal punishment at the judge's discretion. One-half of these fines was divided between the judge and informer, the other half went to the court which tried the offence to form a fund for the payment of salaries; and if out of the city, it became the perquisite of the grand ducal chamber and the Fisc.

The conservators of the laws had cognizance of all these misdemeanors and were bound to conceal the informer's name, while that of the culprit, those responsible for him, and all the circumstances of the case, were registered according to secret information; the offender was debited with the fine in a regular account current for so many breaches of law, but without any notice for four days, or fifteen in the country. If males, they were summoned in person; if females, by their representative, and heard in their defence; after which by a secret vote of two-thirds of the court they were condemned or acquitted within ten days for the city, and fifteen for the country but not until the question had gone to the ballot two separate days and three times each day within that period*.

Sumptuary laws so common in ancient and modern times have

* Cantini, Leggi di Toscana.

ever proceeded from good motives but mistaken principles : while countries are poor they are frugal, riches are more equally distributed, there is commonly but little to spare after the necessities and a few of the comforts of life are provided ; luxury, that will-o'-the-wisp of moralists, is not yet in being, and there are no temptations to extravagance. Afterwards industry and wealth augment, new tastes germinate, new objects allure ; a surplus of produce exists, and either nourishes an increasing population, gratifies new tastes, or is exchanged for foreign commodities. There is now much more than is sufficient for mere physical wants and if the nation cling to its primitive frugality and employ its surplus in trade, it will rapidly gain in wealth : but men do not toil for nothing, and the rich descendant is dissatisfied with the tastes and habits that contented his grandsire. Every generation thus advances a step towards that luxury which still flies before it, the luxuries of one race being only comforts to another and the necessities of a third ; the old then take alarm and laud the "good old times" when it is their own capability of enjoyment, their tastes and estimate of life that have really faded, increased luxury being only the same step which they took in advance of their fathers, and these again beyond the older time. The age's extravagance is thus denounced ; sumptuary laws are promulgated, evaded, re-enacted, and ultimately abandoned : but in the interval much mischief is done to those branches of industry which either directly or indirectly pampered the rich man's fancy, whether in exchange for foreign commodities or in a direct supply at home ; and through him to the whole community. Luxury undoubtedly tends to weaken both the moral and physical powers and to make man the slave of his own enjoyments and a selfish sensualist ; but at what point is the evil to be arrested ? at what point can it be arrested without producing a greater ? The vast machine of society once rolled onward by mental and physical energy, by the wishes and necessities of nature, cannot again be stopped or even impeded with

impunity, until it arrive at the culminating point. But if surplus riches could be turned into less selfish channels than those where they usually flow; if they could be directed to the construction of great and useful public works, such as might raise the admiration of successive ages, instead of being expended in personal pride and sensuality; then the wealth of individuals would be enjoyed by all, envy would hide its head, the citizen and the community would be reciprocally proud, and luxury so far from injuring the physical powers or generous spirit of a nation would nourish and improve them both. Sumptuary laws therefore unless made prospectively in the early stages of national civilisation, which is impossible, are impolitic, useless, and injurious, inasmuch as they impede the circulation of wealth, hurt industry, decrease population, and diminish human enjoyment; and at the very moment in which Cosimo promulgated them he was earnestly promoting the manufacture of those very materials the use of which he thus restrained or prohibited, apparently unconscious of the inconsistency! He probably trusted to a foreign demand for the clearance of his market; but the tastes and habits of Tuscany had been long fixed; the silk-manufacture, even interwoven with gold and gems, had existed in Italy since the ninth century, and was in very early times one of the principal trades of Florence; so that the use of silks had spread not only through towns and cities, but to the most obscure and remote Castelli of the rural districts. Amongst the statutes of *Castello di Porciano* an ancient stronghold of the Counts Guidi in the Casentino, a sumptuary law was promulgated about the middle of the fifteenth century which prohibited the use of gems, worked gold and velvet dresses, silk brocades, and similar manufactures*. Early in Cosimo's reign the Spanish dress began to prevail amongst the higher Florentine circles; pre-

* Vide Cantini and his authorities cited, (*"Leggi di Toscana," Illustration*, vol. i., p. 328,) viz. *"Anastasio Bibliotecario, Vita del Pontefice Pascale, 10," "Istoria dell' Arte di Seta in Firenze," "Storia di Ugo Falcardo."*

vious to this but varying with the times and individual rank, the most general habit of the mass of Italians was not unlike what is still worn by the mendicant friars which in its origin and materials was merely the poor man's raiment, not a religious uniform. That extravagance of Tuscan dress which produced the above law was attributed to the long residence and evil communication of the Spanish armies in Tuscany, and the law itself was imitated even with greater severity and distinction of classes in 1558, by the community of Pistoia who declared its provisions to be made according to the "*common, healthy, good, pure, and vulgar comprehension of men,*" an example of legal composition that might perhaps be usefully followed in other countries*.

By the power of faction and the arms of strangers Cosimo before eighteen years of age was seated on a tottering throne beset by doubt, danger, and difficulty, and his reign forms one of the most remarkable epochs in Florentine history: praise and blame have been meted out to him with no unsparing hand by passion, prejudice, and that universal hatred with which he managed to inspire the nation. He found her struggling for a feverish existence in gloom poverty and misfortune, surrounded by external dangers and menaced both by friend and foe; weak and fretful within; still writhing from the torments of slavery but with a vivid remembrance of departed liberty; with spirits excited, passions fierce; and the whole frame of society ready to burst asunder: no native troops; dependent on foreign swords and more dangerous hirelings; commerce ruined; industry enfeebled; resources gone; agriculture withered; manufactures decayed; ruined towns, and devastated plains! Such was the state of Florence at Cosimo's accession. He left her with increased dominion, augmented population, cities flourishing, and industry awake and active: with agriculture reviving, manufactures in vigorous movement, extensive commerce, and flourishing revenues. He left order in public departments,

* Cantini, Leggi.

the laws improved, simplified, and in despotic action ; a numerous well-organized militia, a regular army, and a rising and not inglorious fleet. He found war and for a while pursued it, but he left peace ; he found want, he left abundance ; he found Florence feeble and despised ; he left her strong, respected, and even courted by the greatest potentates of Europe. He found the mangled corse of a tyrant still warm and reeking, and cemented a more enduring tyranny with his blood ; he found the remnant of a high-spirited fierce and elastic liberty, and left a heavy mass of unleavened slavery. Florence no longer floated amidst surrounding nations in the unfettered buoyancy of youth ; her race was run, her chariot broken, her free spirit passed away ; one iron hand now ruled her destiny, and like the single senator of modern Rome she became a bitter mockery of the ancient and once illustrious republic.

Such were the results of Cosimo's long domination and the vigorous spirit of his sway : but with the full extent of evil that purchased all this and continued to maintain it ; with all the coercion, the misery, the moral suffering, the abject slavery, the fettered mind, and the prostration of human dignity, we are as yet unacquainted ; cotemporaries alone could have enlightened us and they are lamentably silent : but we know that he broke the spirit of the people ! *

COTEMPORARY MONARCHS. — England : Elizabeth. — Scotland : Mary. — France : Francis II. until December 1560 ; then Charles IX. until 1574 ; then Henry III. — Spain : Philip II. — German Emperor : Ferdinand I. until 1564 ; then Maximilian II. — Naples and Sicily : Philip of Spain. — Portugal : Sebastian. — Popes : Pius IV. until 1565 ; then in 1566 Pius V. until 1572 ; then Gregory XIII. — Turkey : Sultan Solymán until 1566 ; then Selim II. — Poland : Henry of Anjou.

* We here take leave of Scipione Ammirato, a minute and accurate historian, but somewhat cramped in his narrative of latter times, as writing under the auspices of the Medici. Also of Giovanni Batista Adriani, who writes more agreeably and perhaps more freely.

CHAPTER VI.

FROM A.D. 1575 TO A.D. 1587.

FRANCIS I.

GRAND DUKE OF TUSCANY.

FLORENCE now ceases to be an independent state ; henceforth she sinks into a secondary existence as the mere capital of Tuscany and seat of grand-ducal government :
A.D. 1575. until the Austrian dynasty there is little of grave historical interest to narrate, but much of what may be called personal memoirs ; wherefore that period between the death of Cosimo I. and the accession of the house of Lorraine will for the most part be rapidly passed over as dull, trifling, and historically unprofitable except as an example of crime, bigotry, corruption, bad government, and extreme puerility ; painful to tell and melancholy to contemplate : a period in which the gradual decay and final disappearance of the Medici like a pestilence from the earth, is the only real satisfaction to be derived from a perusal of their concluding history.

The death of Cosimo made no immediate change in Florence ; for ten years Francesco the First had been partially governing and easily assumed the sovereignty ; the nation was obedient, its spirit down, and no symptoms of revolution were manifest. He was saluted as Grand Duke by Gregory XIII. and the princes who had acknowledged that title, but abstained from using the crown through fear of offending the emperor. This monarch's first act as if emblematic of his future reign,

was to confine Camilla Martelli in a convent, even on the very day of her husband's death, with orders for the most rigorous treatment! At thirty-three years of age, addicted to pleasure luxury and indolence, Francesco was disinclined to pursue his father's troublesome but manly politics, and although an equal encourager of art and industry fell far beneath him in spirit, ability, and fitness either to fill his place amongst European princes or hold the balance of Italy. Cosimo's powerful mind gave unnatural strength to his country; under Francis it collapsed: Cosimo kept due decorum with the house of Austria, for he was indebted to it, but he knew how to maintain his independence when necessary; by a close alliance with Rome and a studied intercourse with France he curbed both its branches, enhanced his own value, and rendered his enmity formidable. For a long time the power of Spain in Italy was too insecure to dispense with him or even risk his estrangement, and the emperor though always unfriendly, avoided an open rupture. Francis I. swerved, even before the Grand Duke's death, from this course and resolved to cling exclusively to Spain and Austria in hopes of preserving his father's influence in Italy, with additional protection against foreign enemies. One of his first wishes was a confirmation of his title and he so far succeeded as to have the Tuscan ambassador received at Vienna with the same rank and honours as those paid to the ancient Florentine republic. This displeased the Duke of Ferrara who afterwards denounced him at Venice to Henry III. of France as a staunch friend of Austria. Ferrara then attempted to disturb the Tuscan frontier by fomenting squabbles amongst the Garfagnana peasantry, and with such effect that troops were assembled on both sides and war became imminent until Philip II. peremptorily arrested it. A Turkish fleet of three hundred and seventy sail appeared on the African coast, captured Tunis and Goletta, alarmed all the western states, and then retired without further mischief, but by bringing up Don John of Austria from

Sicily through the Piombino channel gave Francesco an opportunity of requesting his good offices with Philip II. to employ Don Pietro de' Medici. This youth was rich, proud, wicked, and utterly debauched; his infamy even amongst the Medici was remarkable; and his plots, insults, libertinage and violence spared none, not even his brother's judges in their seat of office. But exclusive of this Francesco desired his absence, for since Cosimo's decease he disliked the presence of both brothers; no good feeling existed between them and his mistress Bianca Cappello who governed him, neither could he endure the remonstrances of Ferdinand about his cruelty to Camilla Martelli and unbounded devotion to the former. Ferdinand sympathised with Camilla and encouraged her to patience, but disgusted with court, he retired permanently to Rome and there received information of a lately-relinquished plot against his family, the particulars of which were instantly transmitted to Florence. Orazio Pucci, son of that Pandolfo who had conspired against Cosimo in 1560, determined to avenge his father's death, nor could all the subsequent favour of Cosimo obliterate his vindictiveness. Francesco's odious rule made it easy to find willing assistants, and four young men of the Ridolfi, the Capponi, the Alamanni, and Macchiavelli families joined in this danger. It was settled that a banquet should be prepared in one of their houses and the most distinguished and beautiful women in Florence assembled to meet all the reigning family including Cosimo, who was alive when the plot began. Cosimo's mode of life rendered this plan abortive; his death lessened the difficulty and infused new spirit into the conspirators: medals of Brutus were struck at Rome and carried as a symbol of companionship, but the quarrel of the brothers and Ferdinand's departure baffled them; so that both the design and all circumspection about the danger were laid aside together and the secret so badly kept that Ferdinand had notice of the whole transaction. Pucci was arrested, but

not before he had wounded himself so badly as to retard his examination and give the rest time to fly. They tried to justify themselves, and attributed their flight to the effects of private malice, demanding a passport to return and prove their innocence. This was granted but they fled beyond the Alps, and Pucci after a full confession was hanged on the same beam which fifteen years before had quivered to the dying struggles of his father. Twenty young Florentines were declared to be either accomplices or privy to the plot, and a searching persecution followed; so that not less than 300,000 ducats fell into the grand-ducal treasury by confiscating property under the *Legge Polverina*, now for the first time brought into action and pushed to its utmost by a remorseless tyrant. The combination of avarice and cruelty in this act disgusted everybody: the plot had been renounced; it was considered as the folly and excitement of youth, not a grave conspiracy to destroy the government; public sympathy was with the conspirators, and there were probably few that rejoiced in their failure: the principal families of Florence were brought to shame, and innocent children of unconvicted men were reduced to beggary!

About this time a revolution at Genoa attracted the eyes of Europe towards that quarter and threatened the peace of Italy. In 1528, when Andrea Doria quitted the French for the imperial service his first object was Genoa: at that time he was blamed by many for this desertion, but posterity has acquitted him by a more impartial sentence: the contract was mutual, the conditions were not observed by France, whose general tried as is said to assassinate him, and moreover his engagement of service had expired: no ties of justice, honour, or even gratitude existed to attach him to Francis, and his country's cause drew him strongly the other way*. He abolished the names of Guelph and Ghibeline and restored Genoa to independence but

* Gustiniani, *Annali di Genoa*, Carta cclxxx.

not to freedom, for a strong-winged aristocracy still soared above the people and pounced on what they pleased. Unsuccessful plots against established governments leave the latter more powerful; they are generally attributed rather to the excess than the want of freedom, and liberty gains nothing by the reaction; for the mass of a people must be deeply imbued with the necessity of freedom to insure its triumph. The failure of Fieschi's conspiracy in 1547 left the Genoese aristocracy more powerful than before; it occasioned a further contraction of the circle even to the confines of an oligarchy, and the failure of another Fieschi at Paris, almost while we write, has fixed the king more firmly on his throne, scared the supporters of order and regular government, and dealt a severe blow to the real liberty of France.

Andrea Doria, intending to stifle faction when he emancipated Genoa, mingled every class of citizens except the lowest or plebeians by arranging them under twenty-eight names of distinguished families including all shades of political opinion, and succeeded in uniting the mass so firmly together that old sects withered, but young shoots soon replaced them. Under the names of these twenty-eight houses, or *Alberghi*, the whole citizen population of Genoa eligible to state honours was reduced: at first there were twenty-three families amongst the ancient aristocracy and only five of the more recent nobility who by these regulations were allowed to preserve their original name: the latter were called the *Portico Nuovo*, or *Portico di San Pietro*; the former the *Portico Vecchio*, or *Portico di San Luca*; but as the "Golden Book" of Genoa was not so firmly closed as that of Venice, the *Portico Nuovo* afterwards increased! The riches and influence of ancient families however still enabled them to keep in power while the rest were fretted at being thus deprived of what the laws allowed; and the lowest classes with a lively recollection of their former influence, felt themselves entirely neglected. The alarm occasioned by Fieschi's bold conspiracy enabled government to reduce the circle of

supreme power with manifest advantage to the Portico Vecchio by a reform derisively called the *Garibo* or *Garibetto*, because Andrea Doria used to declare that he would "*Dar Garibo*" or set public affairs in order by it; and his vast influence, with a general respect for his character, kept the Portico Nuovo from any violent expression of their discontent. Even after his death the revolt and protracted resistance of Corsica by its outward pressure restrained the spirit of discord within; but once relieved from this weight the steam began to work and the discontented nobles of the new Portico, themselves sprung from the people, made use of democratic indignation to destroy their rivals, which after one fruitless attempt at reconciliation, they accomplished by driving them from the town. Ambassadors were despatched by both parties to Spain, France, and Tuscany; the Portico Nuovo demanded assistance from the two last, and allured by Francesco's vast wealth and near neighbourhood offered him the Lordship of Genoa as they had before indirectly done to Cosimo. The Portico Vecchio applied to Philip who also through them caught a glimpse of the sovereignty while apparently intent on restoring harmony alone, and the Grand Duke secretly promised to aid him in this acquisition but not without a share of the spoil; alleging his pretensions through the Florentine republic to Sarzana and Sarzanello as a justification. Nor did Don John of Austria undervalue this opportunity of scooping out a principality for himself, and therefore shaped his course to the troubled city, while Francesco was collecting a strong force in Lunigiana ready to profit by circumstances. Pope Gregory XIII. sent Cardinal Morone as a peace-maker, with whom Philip hypocritically chimed in to calm Francesco, while the levy of troops in Lombardy and a naval armament at Carthagenia belied his own words and startled Italy. The Genoese forbade Don John of Austria to enter their port, and Gregory with unusual spirit declared to the Spanish ambassador that if his master presumed to oppress Genoa he

had a million of gold in Saint Angelo every farthing of which and all the Italian powers should be employed against him. Francesco endeavoured to convince the pontiff of Spain's sincerity at the very moment he himself was offering to assist her and share the conquest, which he was not disposed to relinquish even to Philip himself, still less to have Don Juan for a neighbour with all Genoa at his command. This last fear finally changed his tone and Gregory was soon as strenuously urged to interfere as he had been before entreated to be calm. Francesco also endeavoured to impress on Philip's mind the dangers of an Italian war to Spanish dominion as France had offered every assistance to the democracy, and moreover had sent a special messenger to negotiate a league with him at Florence for upholding the independence of Genoa. He also persuaded the emperor to oppose any infringement of imperial rights over that city, and spread the alarm of Don Juan's designs through all Italy besides allowing the Portico Nuovo to recruit secretly both officers and men in his dominions: Montauto was sent to command the Genoese forces and Giulio Sali permitted to assemble a thousand of the Pisan militia for their aid whom Francis himself supplied with stores and provisions*. To Don Juan's remonstrances he opposed his own independence and his subjects' protection as an excuse; and seeing the *Presidij* reënforced, besides hearing of the Spanish minister's open declaration that the storm would sweep towards Tuscany, he promptly assembled ten thousand militia in those districts, besides strengthening the garrison of Siena and at once offering to sell four of his galleys to the Genoese. These determined and spirited acts disconcerted Don Juan who was not yet openly supported by Philip; but not content with this the Grand Duke plainly declared to Giovan Andrea Doria who commanded the aristocratic forces and acted with Spain, that he would not tamely see a war

* Botta, Storia, Lib. xiii.—Galluzzi, Lib. iv., cap. i.—Mecatti, Stor. Cron. di Firenze, vol. ii., p. 758.

kindled so near home if thirty thousand men could prevent it. The Portico Vecchio however pushed on their attacks with vigour and success until everything by Morone's exertions, was referred to the imperial ministers, the pope, and the king of Spain: but the aristocracy still resisted nor was it until Francesco's army threatened them from Lunigiana that they yielded, and in October 1575 concord was restored by a reform which took place in the following March*.

This transaction is sufficient to show what a powerful organization of military force and national resources Cosimo had established in Tuscany, and how formidable he might have made himself had health and ambition lasted, when so inferior a character as Francesco was enabled to assume such an attitude.

Don Juan in revenge opposed every possible impediment to the recognition of Francesco's title, until the latter wearied out with vexatious delays applied directly to Maximilian II. with a loan of 100,000 ducats and information of certain intrigues against him by Ferrara about the crown of Poland, besides other small services, enough to show his capability of being useful. The result was a resolution to terminate this vain and puerile contention by creating Francesco Grand Duke of Tuscany without noticing the papal Bull or any feudal subjection to the empire; which diploma after publication at Florence in February 1576 gave precedence of all other Dukes and immediately after the Venetian Ambassadors to the Grand Duke's representatives at the imperial court †.

Embassies of congratulation immediately crowded to Florence from almost all the European states, filling the court with festivity and administering largely to Francesco's pride; but this enjoyment was confined to the palace, there was no public sympathy; the Grand Duke's rule became daily more hateful, and Cosimo's steady rigour every moment more regretted.

* Muratori, *Annali*.—Galluzzi, *Lib. iv*^o, cap. i^o.

† Galluzzi, *Lib. iv*^o, cap. i^o.

Cosimo himself governed, and did justice between man and man; he received the complaints of his people and considered them: Francesco left this duty to those who had an interest in perverting justice: the former long ere he died wrote sharply to the Prince on this subject, but still more so to the supreme council whom he upbraided for their neglect of his established custom of allowing every class of persons to address letters to himself with the certainty that their business would never be divulged*. The most noted of these ministers was Antonio Serguidi of Volterra who by a long and assiduous service in various household posts without much personal merit, had advanced in favour; his marriage with old Concini's daughter brought him the support of that able minister during Cosimo's life-time and finally introduced him to the cabinet, but at Cosimo's death he undermined Concini's influence and cunningly sought the support of Bianca Cappello through whom he disposed of every public employment.

The supreme council of state had gradually melted into a mere court of justice by the operation of the *Pratica Segreta*, and this subsequently degenerated from the same cause, namely the non-attendance of the sovereign in person and the creation of secretaries, who with any others he pleased to name transacted all state affairs. Hence appointment to office became uncertain, partial, corrupt, and favour overcame right especially in the creation of senators, about which Cosimo had ever been so rigidly impartial as once to refuse a person recommended by Pius IV because others of the same family were already in that assembly. Dissatisfaction therefore increased, a shameful mal-administration of justice terrified the innocent more than the guilty and allowed the great to trample on it with impunity: hence alarming disorders augmented, and a hundred and eighty-six cases of assassination, or attempts at it, occurred in the brief period of eighteen months after Cosimo's

* Galluzzi, Lib. iii., cap. ix.

decease. This evil spread rapidly, murder and robbery stalked abroad unchecked amongst the hills of the Mugello the Casentino and Florentine Romagna. Increased severity only inflamed crime, offenders became more numerous, even more wicked from despair; the peasantry perplexed by a multitude of vexatious laws against these freebooters found it less dangerous to join than fight them; the feudal mountain chiefs and papal borderers were in continual feud and retained these outlaws for revenge until at last this miniature of the ancient condottieri became too strong for ordinary law, so that the Tuscan militia and papal troops were forced to act ere these provinces were quieted*. The plague too, which had burst forth at Trent and swept fearfully over Lombardy, after carrying off seventy thousand Venetian subjects, now threatened Tuscany: commerce ceased, all intercommunication was suspended and terror became universal; the shops were deserted, the temples thronged, minds weakened, and superstition paramount: in addition, clouds of locusts devoured the Maremma crops and the extraordinary contributions raised to meet these evils added to the general misery. Amidst this gloom a brilliant comet appeared in rapid progress through the heavens and gave a fixed direction to the conjectures of astrology, which charged it with all the existing calamities; but the more sagacious monks declared these signs, wonders, and misfortunes to be a visible expression of divine wrath because their convents were made to pay the Gabella. The forced labours called "*Comandate*," besides other burdens on both peasant and landlord, levied round Florence to meet the fanciful and expensive decorations of villa Pratolino was a fertile source of mischief which destroyed cattle and tillage and ruined all agricultural enterprise: but besides all this, tears fell fast and frequent in Florence as her scaffolds quivered to the struggles of dying kinsmen, victims dragged in from German forests and Sicilian plains to pay

* Galluzzi, Lib. iv°, cap. ii°.

the never-ending penalty of Pucci's conspiracy*. Courtly licentiousness lent its aid and threw a deep disgusting shadow on the picture while it took fast root in Florentine society: murders of the darkest hue filled the deep cup of princely wickedness, and Don Pietro young as he was, drank largely; for heartless headstrong and dissolute, this cold-blooded murderer of his unhappy wife floated conspicuous on the ruddy wave of Medician villany. His libertinage was not confined to what are called legitimate channels, but on the contrary involved the most shocking debaucheries, so that even at the court of Florence amongst an unscrupulous kindred he and his companions were preëminent!

His wife and cousin, Donna Eleonora de Toledo, had arrived at court under Cosimo's protection replete with beauty and modesty, and the Duke soon became so attached to her as to occasion a report that his son's marriage was a measure of mere precaution to hide the consequences! She is said at least to have come innocent to Florence but Medician influence dissolved her morality and left only dregs behind: whether contaminated before or after marriage her imprudence soon became apparent, and the excessive attention shown by her to Bernardo Antinori, then under confinement, exhibited the blindness of her passion. Condemned to exile in Elba for a justifiable homicide he corresponded with her through the hands of his brother, but the latter imprudently giving one of his letters to Giulio Ceccini a musician who was waiting to see the princess, his curiosity became excited, both seal and honour were simultaneously broken, and the billet was carried to the Grand Duke instead of its original destination. Antinori was instantly sent for; he heard the letter read by Francesco himself; walked quietly to the Bargello, and was there strangled without further ceremony! The brother escaped for the moment from Florence but not from the tyrant's vengeance: Eleonora

* Galluzzi, Lib. iv°, cap. ii., pp. 33 to 35.

on hearing of the discovery wrote after some delay to her brother at Naples but it was too late ; her fate was already decided. With a flood of tears she embraced her child, tore herself desperately away and was instantly hurried off to the villa of Cafaggiola where Don Pietro stabbed her to the heart while kneeling at his feet imploring mercy from him and God's forgiveness of her errors ! The body was carried to Florence and privately buried in the church of San Lorenzo, where on some repairs being made in 1608 the writer of the manuscript whence this account is taken, asserts that he saw it. Her remains "had been removed from the new sacristy and placed under the roof, and she *was so beautiful without the corpse being in the least corrupted or injured, (and what is most astounding and marvellous, the nose not in the slightest degree injured) that she appeared exactly as if she were sleeping, and was dressed all in white*"*. Francesco was privy to the whole transaction ; the right of murder was an heir-loom in the family peculiarly his own and in this instance lent, not alienated ; the males rioted in all the rankness of sensuality ; the females were first corrupted and then sacrificed to their husbands' jealousy or turpitude. The world was told that Eleonora died of a palpitation of the heart but Philip II. learned the truth, and all her own family, including the Duke of Alva were indignant, so that through their angry expressions the fact became public†.

But the bloody chariot still rolled on ! Donna Isabella de' Medici, Francesco's sister, and wife of Paulo Giordano Orsini Duke of Bracciano, was the admiration and delight of Florence : wit, beauty, and talent, made her conspicuous amongst the

* "Origine e Descendenza della Casa de' Medici" (folio 273 to 278). It has been already said that this MS., from the handwriting, seems to be of the seventeenth century ; but there are besides this notice some curious records of such preservation of bodies in Florence to be found in "L'Osservatore

Fiorentino" (vol. vi., p. 198), to say nothing of Buonarroti, whose tomb was opened about the middle of the eighteenth century and the body found *unaltered*, looking as though he had just expired — See also Botta, Stor. d'Italia, Lib. xix.

† Galluzzi, Lib. iv., cap. ii°.

females of the day, and illustrious rank added a brilliancy to her other endowments that dazzled every eye, and captivated every heart but her husband's. Learned in the French, Spanish, and Latin tongues, and speaking them all with fluency ; a perfect musician, mistress of almost every instrument, singing with infinite melody, a poetess and *improvisatrice* by nature, Isabella was the soul of all around her and the fairest star of the Medici *. Such is her portrait, nearly in the words of an almost cotemporary writer. But she was not exempt from frailty, and Cosimo himself was accused of loving her with something more than pure paternal affection : this is probably false, easily said and hard to disprove, yet it shows of what the public thought him capable. As she was kind to Bianca Cappello Francesco favoured her, but whether from weariness of a married life or disgust at her conduct, Orsini rarely visited Florence and left his wife under the care of a cousin named Troilus : this man was soon captivated, he killed Lelio Torello the Grand Duke's page, through pure jealousy, and proved an unfaithful guardian ! But many were the admirers of Isabella de' Medici ! At Rome her reputation hung lightly on the statue of Pasquin, and at Florence her secrets were no better kept : for a time Cosimo's authority served as a shield, and being cognizant of everything he repeatedly warned her of his mortality. The pasquinades of Rome were transmitted to Francesco by his brother along with complaints of Isabella's scandalous notoriety, and Duke Francis hastened to make arrangements with Orsini for her murder as the only effectual remedy. Some time before this Isabella having some foreboding of mischief wrote to Catharine of Medicis and was advised to seek refuge in Genoa where a galley would be ready to receive her : it was too late ; like Eleonora her sentence was already passed and death secretly awaited her. On coming to Florence Orsini

* Origine e Descendenza de' Medici, MS., folio 268.—Galluzzi, Lib. iv., cap. ii., p. 37.—Botta, Storia d'Ital*, Lib. xiv.

paid his wife the most marked attention even with the appearance of affection until the sixteenth of July 1576, only five days after Eleonora's death, when she accompanied him to the villa of Cerreto Guidi accompanied by Lucrezia Frescobaldi and other ladies of her household. The supper was unusually agreeable; Orsino's manner particularly affectionate; when the princess retired he presented her with two dogs which she was to try in the next day's sport, and subsequently sent her an invitation to occupy his apartments during their stay at the villa. On receiving this message Isabella with an involuntary shudder turned to Lucrezia Frescobaldi saying, "Lucrezia, shall I go or not go, 'what sayest thou?'" To which Lucrezia answered, "He is your 'husband madam, but do as you please.'" She went and was received with smiles, but even in the moment that Orsino's arms pressed her with apparent fondness he suddenly slipped a noose round her neck and betrayed her with a kiss! She died after a violent struggle, but according to the Grand Duke's account by a sudden fit of apoplexy while bathing her head, and a hypocritical letter of condolence from him to Orsino closed the scene. Troilus Orsino was subsequently assassinated in France, for no country was impenetrable to the Medician dagger, and Isabella's murderer continued the intimate friend of her two brothers!

Cosimo, the son of Eleonora followed his mother to the grave in August and being heir-presumptive to the crown it is not surprising that in the suspicious and excited state of public feeling his death was without reason attributed to foul play.* It was on the contrary, a great mortification to Francis who hated the idea of his brother's succession, and the Grand Duchess gave him daughters alone †: he therefore became

* Mecatti, vol. ii., p. 761.

† Amongst the deaths that distinguished this year was that of George Vasari. He was the friend and pupil of Michelangelo in painting and architecture, and the agreeable though

somewhat inflated biographer of the Tuscan artists. His principal work at Florence is the "*Uffizi*," a handsome piece of architecture but disfigured by the gallery above, an addition never dreamed of by the artist. He also

fretful and unhappy, and the natural gloom of his character so much augmented that he even reproached Bianca Cappello for her sterility. To her his devotion had been steadfast and unbounded during thirteen years for she has been described as one of those women who seem born to excite powerful emotions: her story is singularly romantic.

As the daughter of Bartolommeo Cappello one of the most illustrious of Venetian nobles, she lived from infancy in all the splendour of that age and country and was endowed by nature with every female attraction: grace and fascination hung on her movements and whether grave or gay, silent or speaking, her soft and flexible muscles would assume the fairest and most expressive forms of evanescent feeling; for without any peculiar regularity of feature she concentrated within herself the varied influence of every feminine beauty, and had lures for every heart. In one of those narrow streets which form the only land communications in Venice was situated the Florentine bank of Salviati, and precisely opposite stood the palace of Bartolommeo Cappello: amongst the numerous clerks of that opulent company was Piero Buonaventuri a young and handsome gentleman of reduced family but extremely attractive manners, and holding a responsible office in the company. So near a neighbourhood afforded him many opportunities of seeing the young and lively Bianca and finally of declaring his affection: neither had his handsome figure been unobserved by the girl, nor failed of its impression; for in her innocence thinking that such a form *deserved* to be chief partner of the bank she fondly persuaded herself that he really was so, and the road thus prepared Bianca fell deep in love ere she discovered that Piero held only a subordinate place in the establishment. A previous knowledge of this might have saved her by rousing the Venetian pride, but it was now too late, for

built the connecting gallery from the vestibule of the San Lorenzo Library, Palazzo Pitti to the Palazzo Vecchio, after the design of his master. and restored or rather completed the

vows had been exchanged and troth pledged on either side : the ring presented and the bride already sworn : secret visits, fears, excited hopes, resolutions made and broken, and all the tumult of the wildest passion had killed both pride and reason and altogether annihilated prudence.

One summer's evening Bianca crossed the street to visit Piero, leaving her door unclosed ; a family tradesman who happened to be calling for orders shut it on quitting the palace, little dreaming of the consequences that trifling act was to produce ! In the morning Bianca stepped across the street covered only by a light mantle but found herself shut out, and after vainly trying to awaken an old nurse her only confidant burst into an agony of tears. The day was already breaking, not a moment remained for discussion, Piero reconducted her to his chamber, collected every resource that time allowed, hurried his wife into a gondola and soon breathed more freely on the Adriatic. After some danger they arrived at Florence where the marriage ceremony being completed the lovers were established in his father's house. This event agitated all Venice, for the Cappelli were potent, and the whole nobility sympathised : Grimani Patriarch of Aquileia, Bianca's uncle, neglected nothing that pride and indignation dictated, and all the honour of the golden book turned pale at Piero's audacity ! A reward of 2000 ducats was set on his head ; his uncle Giambatista was arrested and died in the Venetian prisons ; Italy resounded with the adventure ; and reproof, pity, envy, and admiration, filled the public mind. Meanwhile old Buonaventura who was very poor, felt this additional charge so much as to dismiss his only servant, and his wife being helpless, the noble and delicate Bianca, the child of luxury and refinement, the future Grand Duchess of Tuscany, was compelled to perform every menial household service ! But love overcame all, and terror for Piero's life coupled with the dread of falling herself into the hands of an enraged father kept them both close prisoners, and made her sub-

mit most cheerfully. The story had been long public when Francesco became curious to see its heroine; one day driving across the Place of Saint Mark he suddenly looked up at the windows when Bianca, never having seen him before, was peeping from behind the blinds; their eyes however met; and from that moment he became her slave! As the story runs, though not undisputed; an interview was managed unknown to Bianca by the wife of Mondragone a Spanish favourite of the prince, and one day she was suddenly startled by his appearance in a retired chamber of that lady's dwelling. Alarmed at the apparition she fell on her knees, declared herself bankrupt of everything but honour, and implored Francesco's forbearance and protection. Being assured of both the prince retired and that interview terminated. In time however the arts of Mondragone by continually working on her domestic affections, her hopes, and her very fears for Piero's life, gradually undermined her principles and with the countenance of a heartless, grovelling, and contemptible husband, whom she nevertheless continued to love until his death, secretly became the prince's mistress. During this amour Francesco married, but Bianca still reigned paramount, and Giovanna of Austria a princess of more virtue than beauty complained in vain of his conduct.

Bianca and Piero were magnificently lodged near the palace; he was promoted to the highest household dignities, became proud, insolent, and unpopular; licentious in conduct and universally detested: this proved fatal, and with the acquiescence of Francesco, after a brave resistance against many assailants he was murdered at the corner of Via Maggio not far from his own door, by one of the Ricci family.

Bianca expressed great sorrow for his death; their only daughter Pelegrina afterwards married one of the Bentivogli of Bologna; but she, despairing of again becoming a mother resolved to feign pregnancy and present Francesco with a new-born male infant as her own. The offspring of three women in

three different quarters of Florence was accordingly purchased before birth, and one proving a male child it was properly deposited in her chamber and in due time reproduced to the attendants and Francesco as his own undoubted offspring. Saint Antony being the reputed author of this the infant was named after him and subsequently became a distinguished man under the appellation of Don Antonio de' Medici. Thus ended the second act of this drama: the third was tragic: two of the mothers engaged to supply these children are said to have been murdered; the third escaped; a fourth woman and the principal of Bianca's agents was suspected by her and sent home to Bologna: amongst the Apennines she was wounded by a shot but lived to reach that city and there made her deposition which revealed the whole plan of deception, and she is said moreover to have declared that her murderers were Florentine soldiers and bravos of Bianca Cappello. This process was immediately sent to the cardinal at Rome, but Bianca had already acknowledged everything to Francesco, and without any diminution of his affection. Such accusations of murder in those days from an angry woman should be received with caution even if she really made them; for Bianca's disposition was not blood-thirsty and she felt perfectly sure of Francesco's devotion without the necessity of resorting to violence; besides, robbery and murder were then rife amongst the Apennines: neither have we better authority for believing in the fate of the two mothers than the assertion of Botta and Galluzzi who give no proofs: Bianca was bad enough but she was not a Medici! The complaints of Giovanna meanwhile made all her brothers indignant, and Francesco was angrily threatened until the death of Maximilian II. in October, which took off their attention to affairs of greater consequence. Bianca with all the credulity of that age, not trusting to her own powers of fascination, employed a Hebrew witch to invoke the aid of spirits; she received philtres, recited

incantations, and made use of the various tools with which knavery works on folly: all this was of course exaggerated by malice, jealousy, and vulgar credulity; and so infatuated were the people that after gazing at Bianca's beautiful countenance they still believed the Jewess to be the enchantress!

The new Emperor Rodolph II. was inclined to the Medici and finally brought his uncles to reason, because the influence of Tuscany on Italian politics was still too strong to be forfeited on grounds so slight as the complaints of a jealous woman against her husband. It was however proposed to send an envoy, but more on the part of the brothers than the emperor, to investigate the subjects of quarrel, which were in fact Bianca Cappello and money, for the grand duchess was liberal even to the extreme of extravagance. The result was a remonstrance from Rodolph to treat her with greater lenity and consideration, and fortune soon gave Francesco an opportunity of acceding to his wish by quieting every dispute in the birth of a son on the twentieth of May 1577. This at once reconciled him and he became more generous, nay so considerate as to remove even his mistress from Florence*.

In Genoa the Portico Vecchio was dissatisfied and turbulent: their antagonists not only threatened to exclude them from government but again sought Francis as a protector, offering in eight days to proclaim him Lord of Genoa, as they wanted neither France nor Spain, and were too disunited for self-government. It was one of those moments that distinguishes a spiritless and selfish prudence from generous and legitimate ambition, but the very nature of Francis made him repel such confidence and crouch to more congenial tyranny. He not only refused the national offer but favoured the nobles, and even denied an asylum to some popular malcontents who had been compelled to quit their country.

Leghorn now became an object of care to this sovereign as

* Galluzzi, Lib. iv., cap. ii°.

previously to Cosimo: it had originally belonged to Pisa but was lost at the destruction of Porto Pisano in one of her wars with Genoa; its advantages were not unperceived by Florence at the Pisan conquest wherefore being purchased in 1421 a fort and lighthouse were erected and a few miserable families, principally convicts who gained a scanty livelihood by the fishing and coasting trade, were its only inhabitants. Cosimo after a successful drainage of the Pisan swamps began the improvement of Leghorn and spared no pains to render it fit for man by draining, fortifying, and enlarging the port; but died A.D. 1577. ere his plans were completed. Francis I. determined to build a city and trust to privileges immunities and other benefits for its population. In March 1577 this work began with great ceremonies after Bernardo Buontalenti the engineer had explored the heavens and discovered the most propitious moment. To aid population Francesco would have revived the ancient Florentine commerce with Turkey by reëstablishing the "*Bailo*" or consul at Pera and thus induce Greeks and Levantines to inhabit Leghorn; but the Porte complained of his galleys, naturally at a loss to conceive how two nations could be simultaneously at peace and war with each other. Francis attempted to deceive the Sultan with falsehoods backed by direct promises of safety to Turkish vessels touching at Leghorn; he was on the point of success when the intrigues of France and Venice unsettled the negotiations, and a cargo of slaves ransomed from the Knights of San Stefano turned the scale by their complaints of cruel treatment in the Florentine galleys. "Let them quit this nonsense of the galleys, and lay them up, and be at peace," exclaimed the Sultan, "otherwise we shall do nothing." This language was too honest for Medician duplicity, and the visier in reproaching Francesco's ambassador for his master's falsehoods added, that the Turkish ports would be opened to Tuscan commerce whenever the galleys of San Stefano ceased to cruise and the Grand Duke lent no assistance

to Pope or Spaniard *. This failure was somewhat compensated by the increasing trade with Spain, but Leghorn made little progress during the reign of Francis, yet solid foundations were then laid which have since been justified by the super-structure. Don Pietro de' Medici was sent by his brother to Spain with a splendid retinue under the tutelage of Prospero Colonna in the hope of Philip's giving him some employment suitable to his rank, and the young murderer was received with distinguished honour by that court: he was visited by all his incensed relations of the Alva and Toledo race, and a royal infant happening just then to see the light, the destroyer of his own wife was most appropriately selected by the murderer of his own son to hold it at the sacred font, the highest honour in his power to confer! But his infamy soon gave universal offence and sent him back to Tuscany, the cardinal endeavouring to excuse his excesses as the effects of Colonna's severity coupled with the natural lightness of youth! It is true that he was only nineteen years and a half old when he stabbed his wife and might well be excused for minor villany two years afterwards. The Grand Duchess died in childbed on the eleventh of April 1578 to the regret of the Florentines by whom she was beloved for her virtues and pitied for her sorrows, both made more conspicuous by the villany of her husband †. She left a son and three daughters, namely Don Filippo, Eleonora, Anna, and Maria, and public feeling became so excited in her favour and by indignation against Francis that he quitted Florence on pretence of making a journey through part of his dominions.

The cardinal proposed another marriage but was met roughly, and all further communication ceased; the Medici party at Rome

* Mecatti, Stor^a. Cron^a, vol. ii., Parte ii^a, p. 762.—Galluzzi, Lib. iv^o, cap. iii^o.

† Giovanna is described as of small stature, pale complexion, and not beautiful: but if we may judge from the

head of the statue of Abundance in the Boboli Gardens, which is a portrait of her by Giovanni da Bologna, she must have had a pretty expression of countenance and fine profile.

was broken up and Ferdinand now looking only to personal interests attached himself exclusively to Queen Catharine of France who with all her party were detested by the Grand Duke. Catharine of Medicis had constantly protected those conspirators who escaped beyond the Alps, and were still unmeasured in their abuse of Francis : of these, Antonio and Piero Capponi, and Bernardo Girolamo, were Pucci and Ridolfi's chief accomplices, also the most reckless in their present vituperation. The Duke's course was simple ; a packet of subtle poisons for which the Medician laboratory was celebrated ; 4000 ducats for each murder ; an unlimited credit for all contingent expenses, and a letter to the secretary of his embassy at Paris to put the whole machine in motion, very soon relieved him from this annoyance. Curzio Picchena da Colle was a young man ever ready to execute his sovereign's orders wherefore Bernardo Girolamo soon ceased to breathe : the others became more circumspect : a member of the embassy was tried and saved only by dint of bribery ; the Florentines published this trial accompanied by annotations disgraceful to Francis ; but the remaining conspirators having more fear of the assassin's knife than trust in royal protection dispersed throughout the kingdom, some even flying to England for safety. It was all useless ; the Medici was a keen huntsman ; Italian murderers in the changed circumstances were deemed better than Frenchmen and despatched in such numbers to France and England as to secure his object : all the conspirators fell one by one under their daggers. Queen Catharine, herself a Medici and most royal assassin, would at first have put Picchena to death ; but more inclined to dissimulation and the pleasures of a long vengeance, she maintained a constant opposition to all her cousin's wishes, his favourite schemes of politics, and his personal vanity. She undermined his plans of commerce with the Turk, vexed him with claims on Duke Alexander's property, and promoted the elevation of Giuliano de' Medici to the cardinalship.

But Francis was then too much taken up with Bianca Cappello to give himself any trouble about Catharine's enmity; he had murdered all his principal enemies and was absorbed in the project of marrying his mistress. He had long sworn to espouse her and she now claimed his promise; nevertheless there was some hesitation in placing a woman on the throne of Tuscany who had been so many years his mistress; he feared the world's mockery, the ridicule and contempt of monarchs; he sought priestly council and received it, both for and against the marriage; the latter convinced his reason, and he vowed it should never be; thus breaking his solemn oath to Bianca Cappello: the former re-convinced him of its necessity and he again perjured himself, for Bianca had also propitiated the church, and by means of Francesco's confessor and her own wiles upset all adverse reasoning. A private marriage took place in the palace only two months after Giovanna's decease; the confessor became Bishop of Chiusi, and Bianca was never accused of ingratitude towards him or his family. She removed her residence under pretence of superintending the young princesses, lived in the palace as their governess and kept the whole transaction a profound secret even from Ferdinand, who was employed seeking a wife for his brother amongst crowned heads. Matrimonial negotiations with Austria and Savoy, and squabbles with the latter and Parma fomented by Spain under the mask of a mediator but of the same puerile character as before, occupied the sovereign's attention and at this period form the most prominent portion of Tuscan history. On the Parmesan quarrel much diplomacy was expended, and many accusations made of crimes that were either true in themselves or thought most likely to pass current from the acknowledged character of the parties; nor were actual crimes wanting, all being artfully maintained by Philip who above all things dreaded a good understanding amongst Italian princes; his states in that country were in fact made safe by these divisions and thus becoming

arbiter of their disputes, he gradually absorbed their independence, when by union they might have driven him from Italy. The unfortunate expedition and death of King Sebastian of Portugal with the destruction of his army by the African Moors, left that kingdom open to a disputed succession after the decease of Sebastian's great uncle Henry the Cardinal who was far advanced in years. King Philip II. of Spain as son of Isabella Princess of Portugal resolved to vindicate his own claim by force of arms while the houses of Savoy, Parma, Braganza and others were proving theirs on paper; but being pressed hard in Flanders he had recourse to new loans for this new enterprise. Francesco agreed to supply him with 400,000 ducats or their equivalent in troops, and took this opportunity of pressing on him the advantages of an Italian league against the Turks, and transalpine nations, by which his wars in Flanders and Portugal might be more vigorously carried on when the tranquillity of Italy were thus secured. Philip accepted the money and declined the counsel, but with expressions of high satisfaction and the title of *Most Illustrious* instead of *Very Illustrious*! He appointed Don Pietro to command the Italian auxiliaries, received Don Giovanni natural son of Cosimo into his service, and ordered the Spanish ambassador at Rome to act in concert with Tuscany*.

Don Pietro was to levy ten thousand Italians for the Portuguese war, and Don John of Austria having died suddenly, Prince Alexander Farnese of Parma son of Ottavio and Margaret of Austria, was made governor of the Low Countries. A conspiracy against the Grand Duke by some of the members of his own household gave him new occasion for severity, but the alarm thus excited was soon dissipated by more agreeable prospects; his marriage had been so well concealed that an illness which occasioned the Cardinal's coming to Florence alone A.D. 1579. enabled him to discover it by Bianca's close attendance on her

* Mecatti, vol. ii., p. 763.—Muratori, *Annali*.—Galluzzi, *Lib.* iv., cap. iii.

husband. The year of mourning being terminated Francesco informed Philip of his marriage, awaiting his approbation alone to publish it, which being given he sent Count Mario Sforza of Santa Fiore, and a pompous train to the Venetian republic declaring that he preferred a union with one of its daughters to any other in Europe, that he hoped now to become really its child as he had ever been in heart, and expressed a hope that as Bianca had already given him a son he should be blessed with other proofs of her fruitfulness! So infatuated was he notwithstanding Bianca's open confession of the trick! Nor did this ever cease; Don Antonio was always treated as his child and had a principality purchased for him in the kingdom of Naples to the value of 200,000 ducats besides great emoluments in Tuscany.

At Venice, times and circumstances were changed, the ambassador was received with high honours and unbounded magnificence; the city glowed with uninterrupted joy; senate, nobles, people; all were in ecstasy; and the shamed despised condemned girl, she whose conduct had brought disgrace on her family and the aristocracy; nay had carried dishonour into the very heart of the republic itself by having honestly married the man she loved, now as the adulterous bride of an exalted villain was applauded to the skies! She suddenly became the pride of her family, the glory of her order, the hope of her country; and was immediately adopted by a public decree "*As the true and particular daughter of the republic in consequence of those most singular and most excellent qualities which rendered her worthy of the most splendid fortune!*"

No sooner was this published than the bells of Saint Mark pealed their deep tones over the Adriatic and were followed by all the churches in Venice, the sound of artillery rolled through her canals and sea-born palaces, and the city blazed with countless illuminations; Bianca's father and brother were knighted, with the title of "*Most Illustrious*" and took precedence of all the Venetian aristocracy. The Seignory and Chiefs

of the Council of Ten privately visited the ambassador, and the whole senate in a body congratulated him on the happy event.

Honours and compliments were then bandied between the two states in unmeasured abundance; the Venetian "*Privilegio*" of adoption was taken to Florence by Santa Fiore, followed by two ambassadors charged to invest Bianca with all the prerogatives of her new rank and assist at her nuptials. The pomp and splendour of this embassy are said to have exceeded anything of the kind ever before exhibited by Venice even in its proudest days. The ambassadors Tiepolo and Michieli were accompanied by ninety gentlemen of the highest rank all emulating each other in the magnificence of their state and retinue; Bianca's father and all his family with Grimani Patriarch of Aquileia and a host of Venetian nobles having been previously received at Florence. The embassy arrived in September and being escorted to the palace by Don Pietro, eighty nobles from the city of Venice alone, besides a host of gentlemen from Terra Ferma were there magnificently feasted by the sovereign. But the splendour of Venetian rejoicing was even exceeded by that of Florence; jousts, balls, feasts, tournaments, bull-fights, the chase of wild beasts and every sort of pastime filled the city and adjacent hills and kept the Val-d'Arno alive with their echoes, while the Venetian ambassadors assured Francesco of the republic's wish to identify the interests of either state, and therefore presented Bianca with a valuable jewel in the name of their government; adding as the Senate's request, that the marriage ceremony should be publicly renewed for the sake of crowning the Grand Duchess with a regal diadem to give her equal rank with their two other adopted daughters the queens of Cyprus and Hungary. The pope's nuncio at first objected to this as an interference with his master's prerogative of king-making, but acquiesced on being assured that it was only a formal mode of adoption.

* Galluzzi, Lib. iv., cap. iv.—Botta, Medici, Letters to the Grand Duchess, Lib. xiv.—Origine e Descen^a. de' MS., p. 301.

On the twelfth of October 1579 the Senate, Council, and other magistracies were assembled in the great hall of the old republican palace and Francesco had already occupied the throne, when the Venetian ambassadors introduced Bianca Cappello, followed by all her countrymen, and placed her by the side of the sovereign. The "*Privilegio*" of adoption was then read and ratified, the declaration that Bianca was a true and legitimate daughter of Venice was repeated, and the coronation ceremony finally made her a participator of the paternal favours. The patriarch of Aquileia then pronounced a discourse on the utility of this marriage and the high dignity of being adopted by Saint Mark, after which the ring was presented and the Grand Duchess followed by her husband and all the assembly went in state to the cathedral where high mass finished the ceremony *. The Venetian ambassadors after awhile took their leave of Florence rich in honours and presents, but Bartolommeo Cappello made a longer stay, and Bianca's brother Vittorio remained there permanently.

The whole expense of this marriage to the Grand Duke was estimated at 300,000 ducats, a sum equal to about one year's ordinary revenue of the ancient republic in its most glorious days! These proceedings on the part of Venice were however not all ceremony; their principal object was to seduce Francesco from Spain and bring him over to themselves and French interests, but the Grand Duke soon proved his unaltered sentiments by despatching Don Pietro at the head of ten thousand men to Philip's assistance; yet the mutual courtesies of Venice and Tuscany were suspiciously watched by the latter, and trusting to the reports of his Italian ministers he became groundlessly alarmed, wherefore Don Pietro had instructions to undeceive the king on this point and request that he would caution his ministers against similar misrepresentations. The Italian princes being also jealous of this intimacy between Spain,

* Galluzzi, Lib. iv., cap. iv.—Mecatti, vol. ii., p. 763.

Tuscany, and Venice, as well as of the Grand Duke's favour with Austria, began to draw closer together by family alliances, while the Cardinal of Medicis kept so far aloof from all participation in his brother's marriage as to refuse the Venetian ambassador's congratulations; coolly remarking that even the high honour of affiliation scarcely sufficed to make such a marriage palatable. Some indeed assert that he attempted to poison the Grand Duchess, who becoming aware of this was compelled to live with great circumspection, and being in continual alarm sought to destroy him with his own weapons*.

The quarrel with Catharine of Medicis now began to assume a more open character; she was in continual want of money and saw Francesco lavishing his supplies on Philip while he refused her even what she claimed as an inheritance. Still however with habitual dissimulation she at Giovanna's death sent the Bishop of Beziers to request a loan of 300,000 ducats on landed security with the offer of renouncing all claims to the Medician property. This proposition was declined, though immediately followed by the payment of a large Spanish subsidy; this exhausted both the dissimulation and patience of Catharine and her enmity assumed a more open character. The murders committed by Francesco at Paris had hitherto been slightly noticed and his ambassador allowed to corrupt the ordinary sources of justice; but now the queen determined to let loose her vindictiveness and publish the Grand Duke's infamy. A Florentine bravo recently apprehended declared that he had been sent expressly to murder Troilus Orsini for the reward of 6000 ducats, with orders to remain at Paris in expectation of further employment, and that he was in constant communication with the Florentine ambassador and his secretary who supplied him with money for this purpose. Pecchena was immediately arrested, the bravo's confession published, the ambassador himself threatened, and the minister at Rome commanded to warn all French subjects

* Galluzzi, Lib. iv., cap. iv.—Mecatti, vol. ii., p. 764.

against trusting themselves in Tuscany. The Tuscan ambassador became alarmed, for he was forbidden to enter the royal presence and not even allowed to justify his conduct, nay Marshal Retz and others had much difficulty in dissuading the king from arresting him; but their influence finally released Pecchena with orders to quit Paris in twenty-four hours. Catharine imagined that this would serve as a lesson to make Francesco more tractable; she was mistaken, and even still further incensed by Don Pietro's commanding ten thousand men to gain a crown for Philip on which she herself had claims through the house of Boulogne. Thus despised she resolved to hit her cousin in his tenderest part by excluding the Tuscan ambassador from a seat in the royal chapel! At this Francesco became outrageous and reproaching Catharine with an unnatural desire to humble her own family recalled his ambassador and broke off all intercourse with France*.

The French and Spanish cabinets were rivals for diplomatic dexterity in deceiving and flattering Italian princes: those of Farnese and Este, with open demonstrations of friendship for Spain, were secretly inclined to France, and all but the Grand Duke were vibrating between those powers according to the attraction and repulsion of fear or interest. Francesco alone was exclusively devoted to the house of Austria and still more

A.D. 1580. firmly by the late insult; on which occasion no pains, nor flattery, nor dignities, were spared by Philip in confirming this feeling and availing himself of it to extract all he could from Tuscany. Don Pietro was received with distinguished honours, Count Olivarez was ordered to visit Francis and arrange the proceedings of next conclave, and other Italian ministers were instructed to communicate with him on everything relating to the peace of Italy. All this was the prelude to another loan of 400,000 ducats and the honour of levying four thousand additional troops, provided with arms,

* Galluzzi, Lib. iv., cap. iv.

officers and provisions for the Spanish service. Francis lent more than half this money from his private funds and raised the rest amongst Florentine merchants, besides zealously exerting himself to levy and equip these troops for Philip who thus with great sagacity planned the Portuguese campaign principally at the expense of Tuscany. Francis was further commissioned to equip a certain number of galleys with the offer of being made captain-general of the Spanish navy, but this was declined, that prince being much more devoted to pleasure, indolence, and Bianca Cappello than the fatigues and glory of war: he nevertheless offered to hire thirty royal galleys at 7000 ducats a year each, which with ten of his own all under the command of Don Pietro would sweep the Mediterranean of every corsair, but the Genoese became alarmed and rendered this abortive.

Such efforts began sensibly to diminish the national resources and Philip being in want of additional supplies for the army, which had advanced to Badajos, offered Francesco the "*Presidij*" if he would raise another loan of equal amount to the former, cancel existing debts, and engage to pay the garrison of Piombino: but the Grand Duke's Spanish mania did not induce him to purchase these garrisons at a price beyond what Cosimo had given for the whole Senese Republic; nevertheless he exerted himself to raise the loan and awaited a better opportunity to acquire the "*Presidij*." The Cardinal of Medici's anger at the Grand Duke's marriage seems to have gradually subsided or to have been subdued by Bianca's gentleness and constant endeavours to effect a reconciliation between the brothers: he was extravagant too, and she softened her husband and supplied his necessities: by her means they again became friends, the Medician power recovered strength in Italy and enabled them to act more vigorously against the other princes. The Cardinal of Este directed all the French interest in the sacred college, and in his mode of living exceeded the usual splendour of those pompous times: like others he showed

his greatness by trampling on all law and order as they affected himself and his followers. The being able to do any violence with impunity then formed an essential part of aristocratic greatness and an undoubted symbol of its power ; wherefore the Cardinal of Este supported all the insolence of his retainers, and an affray between them and the papal officers of justice roused even the indolent Gregory, who after having administered a severe personal reproof banished him entirely from Rome. Not being on good terms with his brother he retired to Padua and the Cardinal of Medici hitherto an enemy but anxious to strengthen himself by a reconciliation with Este deemed this an excellent occasion. Addressing him through a confidential agent he dwelt on the impolicy of allowing Gregory to act in this peremptory way merely because the cardinals were divided amongst themselves, when by a little union they could dictate to the pontiff himself: he bade him consider that each had a party much too strong for any other competition ; that they acted foolishly in treating each other as enemies because their brothers were not friends, and that by uniting they would carry everything before them even to the choice of a successor to the popedom. On this overture the Cardinal of Este agreed to act secretly with Ferdinand in everything relating to their common interest and the latter managed to procure his recall, which completely discomfited the adverse party of Parma, Mantua, and other princes. The plague which had raged in Lombardy now spread rapidly to Genoa and even into France, with infinite mischief to trade in addition to its other evils ; and where it failed to penetrate another illness, called in Italy "*il mal di Montone*" (from the sudden giddiness attending it) ran like wildfire over the country : it began in England, spread over France and Spain, and finally entered Italy where but few were spared. The head was attacked with convulsions and delirium and the whole frame weakened to the last degree : it was not always attended with fever but

generally with violent headache and wakefulness and had it been as fatal as universal the country must have been half depopulated. This pestilence attacked Florence in July and killed many of the poorer classes who were suffering from two successive years of scarcity which all the efforts of the office of Abundance could hardly remedy*. The people were moreover out of humour with the government, unhappy, and angry at being rifled to meet the expenses of their sovereign's marriage: the cost of this and the enormous loans and subsidies to Spain generated extreme rigour in the collection of taxes just at the moment when failing harvests sickness and general misery required more than usual lenity. In Florence too the public ill-humour was not diminished by a change of ministry effected through the Grand Duchess: hitherto Jacopo Salviati a cousin of Francis; Maria Sforza of Santa Fiore, and Pandolfo de' Bardi, had been the favourite counsellors and even companions of the sovereign; they had supported him in the affair of his marriage, monopolized all courtly patronage, and awed the public by their enormous influence. Bianca however, probably at the suggestion of Vittorio Cappello, finally withdrew her favour and they were dismissed, leaving the latter sole dispenser of the sovereign favour. Bad as the others were considered, the public impatiently saw themselves at the mercy of an arrogant aspiring stranger against whom all complaints would be useless; and when they beheld Bianca Cappello's most deadly enemy arrive at court, become reconciled to his brother, and pay a marked attention to her; admiration rose, but their mortification did not diminish. It was said that Bianca separated the two brothers until her ends were accomplished, and then for her own security reconciled them; and this triumph of a woman whom the public disliked and accused of more crimes than she probably ever dreamed of, tended to deepen the rancour of public feeling. Besides these sources of

* Mecatti, vol. ii., p. 764.—Galluzzi, Lib. iv., cap. v.

discontent the reappearance of robbers in large bands on the confines of Tuscany became more alarming than ever: they issued principally from the papal states and in strong battalions infested all the country, under secret or avowed protection from the frontier chieftains amongst whom the title of Robber had become rather honourable than otherwise, and increased the respect of their neighbours. Their most renowned leader was Pietro Leoncello of Spoleto, a reputed son of Cardinal Farnese, who with four hundred men ravaged the provinces of La Marca Perugino and the Tuscan frontier. Under another chief called the "*Wild Man*" a second band plundered the confines of Siena and disturbed the Maremma and all the districts of the Spanish garrisons. Even Alfonso de' Piccolomini Duke of Monte Marciano joined them for the sake of taking vengeance on his enemies of the Baglioni race; thus incurring ecclesiastical censure with confiscation of property he became himself an outlaw, and he filled the land with rapine murder and utter devastation. These forays scared even the feudal chiefs who had previously abetted but could no longer control them except by hiring one band to oppose another. Cardinal Sforza was sent with troops and diplomatic powers to restore tranquillity but Francesco would not coöperate beyond his own frontier, yet promised to bring Piccolomini to terms provided that hopes of pardon and restitution of property were held out to him.

This war involved a sort of crusade against the feudal barons and the abuses of its execution increased the calamity:
A.D. 1581.

Francis had given Piccolomini an asylum in Tuscany after the papal general had vainly endeavoured to crush him; but his mother, grandmother, and children were starving at Rome, while Ferdinand vainly pleaded their cause and the pope was spending their confiscated revenues. This roused him to fresh outrage until he was again quieted by the pontiff's assurance of pardon and restitution of property, which through the Grand

Duke's interference ultimately took place. Thus was the sovereign pontiff absolutely compelled to negotiate a formal treaty of peace with a rebellious vassal and robber chief, and the Grand Duke of Tuscany to become his guarantee and mediator through fear of the same outlaw, whose influence in Siena made him dangerous while the faintest remembrance of liberty in that city excited public feeling. Francis now found it expedient to conciliate the pope in order to soften him about the infamous conduct of Paulo Giordano Orsini: this man after his wife's murder fell in love with Vittoria Accoromboni wife of Francesco Peretti and niece of Felice Cardinal di Montalto, afterwards the formidable Sixtus V. He had a powerful rival in Cardinal Farnese who crossed his path and impeded his amours; but the miscreant who had hidden death in a conjugal embrace soon decided on his course: the murder of Vittoria's husband would give him quiet possession of his mistress, and a subsequent marriage would entirely shut out the intruding Cardinal. Francesco Peretti fell by assassination in the streets of Rome and suspicion instantly fell on Vittoria Accoromboni and her paramour. The Cardinal of Medici was disturbed at this event, not from any horror at the deed or the crime that led to it, but on account of the personal danger of his own sister's murderer, the welfare of Orsini's son of whom he was very fond, and the fear of a consequent marriage. The latter at his instance was interdicted by Pope Gregory on pain of rebellion, and a gentleman who had once been wounded by Peretti was induced to own himself guilty of the murder; but Orsini scorned all subterfuge and boldly acknowledged the deed. The greediness of every papal minister in pecuniary matters alarmed Ferdinand for his nephew Virginio Orsini's fortune if the laws were put in force against Paulo, wherefore he prevailed on Gregory to desist, on the latter's promise that no marriage should take place. The most difficult thing was to secure Orsini from Montalto's vengeance: Vittoria Accoromboni had four brothers

two of whom favoured him and two the Cardinal Farnese, but Peretti had opposed the objects of both : Montalto believed that his nephew had fallen by the hand of these brothers but full of doubt and unwilling to create new enemies, concealed every feeling under the mask of a kind and tolerant deportment. He had just lost two great friends in the Cardinals Sforza and Orsini who had promised to secure him the pontificate, and was much subdued and dispirited by these misfortunes : the politic Ferdinand seized this favourable juncture to conciliate him, and as an enemy of Cardinal Farnese thought by promoting Montalto's election to make use of him against his own enemies and secure the safety of Paulo ; wherefore at once offering that Cardinal his support and promising all that his deceased friends could have accomplished, he not only secured Montalto but with him such an accession to his party as baffled every adversary.

The pope's health beginning to decline both his son and Farnese bowed to the Medician ascendancy and a promotion of cardinals agreeable to all parties was settled. Ferdinand was also charged with the conduct of Spanish affairs at Rome and with great authority over Philip's ministers in Italy, conjointly with his brother, who received the new title of *Highness* and the Order of the Golden Fleece. But the court of Florence continued still so unpopular and so much disturbed by the aspiring insolence of Vittorio Cappello and his intriguing supporters that banishment to Venice was the only remedy : this restored Serguidi to more than his former influence, for the Prince secluded in his numerous villas became disgusted with every sort of business and the dignity of Highness though it flattered his vanity had lost its distinction in consequence of the many new titles assumed by Italian princes about this epoch without the imperial sanction ; especially those of Highness and " Most Serene Prince." Indeed this mania, which began through jealousy of the Tuscan Medici, was fast spreading even to the small republics and feudal chiefs ;

but the Venetians still refused to acknowledge them, asserting that the "*Queen of the Adriatic*" alone had a right to the appellation of "*Serenissima*." This title also Francis tried hard to obtain from her, but the negotiations A.D. 1582. were broken off by a quarrel about the capture of Turkish and Jewish property in a vessel claimed as national by the Venetians, because her cargo had been insured by their under-writers. Another vessel laden with grain for the Bey of Rhodes was also taken by the galleys of San Stefano in waters guaranteed by the Venetian Republic to all Turkish vessels and property. Venice insisted on both the injustice and impolicy of these acts, but Francesco, who was obstinately tenacious of his maritime rights, accused her of endeavouring to monopolize the Levant trade under the mask of conciliation and therefore refused any redress. On the twenty-ninth of March 1582 the young Prince Philip of Tuscany died, but the Grand Duke imitating Philip II. of Spain in similar circumstances would allow no public expression of condolence or mourning and consequently became suspected by the people *. This misfortune threw Francis into deep melancholy wherefore burying himself in the shades of Pratolino he passed the greater part of his time hated by all the world but Bianca, who being herself vexed and fretful at her barrenness tried every means that medicine, quackery, or credulity suggested to remove it and give an heir to the dukedom. More attempts were made to induce Don Pietro to marry but in vain; he cared for neither of his brothers; the avarice of one and the advice of the other sickened him; the succession troubled him but little, and the idea of being tied down to some show of propriety by marriage was too dreadful to think of, so that fearing coercion he was about to take refuge in England and claim Elizabeth's protection; but Philip II. found means to stop this and by flattery and alluring promises drew out a

* Galluzzi, Lib. iv., cap. v.

reluctant acquiescence. Ferdinand's mind was still doubtful and his fears awakened about Don Antonio who daily absorbed the Grand Duke's affections; he was furnished with a German guard; his Neapolitan estate of Capestrano was erected into a principality by Philip, and at Florence he passed only under the denomination of "*The Prince*." The arrival of Olivarez at Leghorn was productive of more ceremony than satisfaction to the Grand Duke who expected free communication if not deference on public affairs; nor was he more open to the cardinal at Rome, so that both began to suspect a change in Philip's favour and seeds of doubt were then sown which afterwards germinated. Francis now began to feel that he was a mere vassal and banker to the king of Spain not an independent sovereign, and regretted his heedlessness of Cosimo's more sagacious example, whereupon he quietly began to separate from that crown and attend exclusively to the advancement of Medician influence at the Vatican. To conciliate the pope, and by the direct assistance of Piccolomini, he put Pietro Leoncello da Spoleto to death, who with only six score followers had baffled all the efforts of four hundred papal troops; but at length retreating to the Tuscan town of Galeata amongst many of his old companions, he was treacherously murdered by one of them for a reward offered conjointly by the pope and Grand Duke of Tuscany. Part of this reward was the privilege of pardoning ten robbers even though they were already convicted of high treason, and as Alfonso Piccolomini had been the principal means of the capture and its consequences, his pardon was expected, but still withheld by Gregory who was so bent on that Chief's destruction as not only to break his own promise but even deny the latter's pardon to Leoncello's murderer although included in the list of those which this man was entitled to save. Alfonso was not the person to bear such treatment; so at the head of a hundred and fifty horse he rode from Pienza and laid everything waste in the papal

states. This became a signal for general rising and the country soon swarmed with new bands of robbers ; the pope in alarm again had recourse to Francesco, and again did the latter, after bitterly reproaching him, succeed in pacifying Piccolomini, who finally agreed to enter the French service. The dispute with Venice still continued notwithstanding Philip II.'s efforts to the contrary ; but on the other hand the enemies of Francesco were diminished by a marriage between the Duke of Mantua's son and Eleonora de' Medici, and also between Francesco's natural sister Virginia and Don Cæsar d'Este which healed all previous disputes, especially those puerile squabbles of precedence, between Ferrara and Tuscany. These marriages gratified Francis who thus dissolved the league formed against him by the enmity of the Farnesi ; all their hopes of the pontificate withered while Medician influence became paramount at Rome where Pope Gregory strenuously promoted it as a protection to his own son and nephews when he died. He even promised to make more cardinals, but implored the Grand Duke's aid to subdue the lawless bands that still infested the country, who with an audacity increased by general want, almost besieged him in his capital ! To such a height indeed did this evil attain that through mere personal apprehension the Roman cardinals and nobility hired these bandits as body-guards, which increased their neighbours' terror and compelled them also to keep their domestic outlaws, so that such ruffians were continually augmenting and Rome swarmed with a banditti, rougher and bolder perhaps, but probably not more vicious than those who hired them. Cardinal Farnese tramped the streets with a guard of twenty well-mounted bravos, and the pope's own son was escorted by the captain of a band noted even amongst the wicked for its exceeding wickedness : the ecclesiastical vassals aided by these men destroyed each other with reckless fury, and the rural population had only the choice of being robbed and murdered or of becoming robbers and murderers themselves : the choice

A.D. 1583.

was soon made and the country became one vast den of remorseless cut-throats whom the soldiers were unable to crush and the pontiff too feeble to put down. It was full time for the advent of a Sixtus! But Gregory again supplicated the aid of Francis who sagaciously advised him not to waste time and money in military expeditions but employ the robber-bands one against the other as he had done in Tuscany: by such means said he Leoncello had been killed, and by such means they could always be dissolved: he then re-called all the Tuscan banditti on promise of pardon and endeavoured to pacify the barons: but though this plan succeeded for the moment as a palliative, the disorder broke out with equal violence in the following year when military operations again became necessary.

Medician influence at Rome continued to gather strength as time advanced, until at the year's end a promotion of friendly cardinals settled beyond all doubt the question of its power in the conclave: amongst other creations were included those of Alessandro de' Medici Archbishop of Florence, afterwards Leo XI, and Antonmaria Salviati whom with Francesco Sforza of Santa Fiore were nominated by the Tuscan brothers. Philip II. never relaxed his hold on Tuscany; in small affairs and in great he still meddled, and pretended a sort of parental anxiety for everything connected with the Medici, especially the public resources, which were gradually absorbed by him under the form of loans and only repaid in empty honours, compliments and vanity. The obsequiousness of Francesco was unbounded, and by his desire did Ferdinand still brook the insolent jealousy of Olivarez: for this as well as other things dissimulation became above all things necessary and was much studied especially by the Church: Rome excelled in it; it became more refined as it rose in priestly rank and arrived at its climax in a cardinal and a Medici! Ferdinand practised it against his brother and was well met with his own weapons, but he finally conquered by presenting his villa Ambrogiana and all its broad

domains to Don Antonio! In politics the Grand Duchess daily assumed a more decided and conspicuous part, and the development of her talents pleased Francesco's vanity: she and Ferdinand arranged the marriage of Donna Virginia and the mode of disengaging Don Vincenzio Gonzaga from certain aspersions which had been publicly cast on his virility; a disgusting story told by Galluzzi with far more prurience but none of the wit of Boccaccio, and in a manner unbecoming the dignity of history. This point having been publicly settled the Princess Eleonora's alliance with that prince was allowed to proceed; but the subsequent arrival of Don Pietro accompanied by a beautiful Spanish girl whom he unsuccessfully endeavoured to introduce at court, increased the difficulties about his marriage. A certain Colonel Dovara who had attended him to Spain and acquired considerable influence there, persuaded Francesco that to his, Dovara's, exertions were due many of the honours lately conferred on him by Philip; and supported by Bianca and Serguidi he acquired so extensive an influence, that Ferdinand whom he disliked and had repeatedly offended, saw himself ousted by the new favourite. Dovara however was partly rivalled by Carlo Antonio del Pozzo a Piedmontese of profound legal knowledge and acute intellect who under the cardinal's protection had become Auditor Fiscal; he was hated for his rigour, which was probably the sovereign's, and esteemed for talents and probity, which were certainly his own: he then got the archbishopric of Pisa but still gave Francesco the benefit of his council without forgetting that all his success was due to the cardinal. Pozzo's desire of maintaining a good understanding between the brothers frequently placed him in opposition to the cabinet, and generally acting with disinterestedness he of course took no firm root in courtly favour.

Pope Gregory XIII. died on the tenth of April 1585 and so suddenly as to leave his son the Duke of Soria and his nephews

unprovided for; they immediately threw themselves on the protection of the Medici and were welcomed by Ferdinand as a valuable addition to his party*. There were now about A.D. 1585. fifty-eight cardinals in conclave of whom Ferdinand had secured thirty-seven, all determined to exclude Farnese who had already been baffled three times by the Medici. But Ferdinand, having at last broken off all communication with Spain and defied Olivarez whose insolence was abetted at court, determined to elect a pope of his own, to keep the name a profound secret, and have the whole credit of the transaction. Cardinal Peretti of Montalto was accordingly fixed upon as a deadly foe of Farnese, especially as his nephew's murder had created a belief that Ferdinand's apprehensions for the two Orsini would exclude Montalto above all others from his support. The conclave began on the twentieth of April, and on the twenty-fourth by Ferdinand's dissimulation and able management Peretti became pope even before Cardinal Madruzzo could in the name of the house of Austria protest against the election of any Priest in the French interest. Taking the name of Sixtus V. his gratitude was strongly expressed to Ferdinand, who however at that moment only demanded the exclusion from power of all the friends and party of Farnese †.

Peretti's character is thus described in a letter of the day addressed to the Grand Duke of Florence by his agent Belisario Vinti. "The pope is a grave and patient person who " knows how to dissemble in proper time and place, but prudently, and without fraud or malice: as an enemy of falsehood " and artifice he loves men of probity: he is literary, capable " of state affairs, intelligent and experienced: he will consider " well his resolutions, but once determined he will execute

* The reformation of the calendar was effected by this pontiff and ordered to be adopted throughout Catholic Europe in 1582.

† Raccolta di Tutti i Conclavi Seguiti

dalla Morte di Clemente VII., Sino alla Creazione di Urbino, viii., MS.—Galluzzi, Lib. iv., cap. v.—Mecatti, vol. ii°, p. 768.

“ them with boldness and constancy. He is thought to possess
“ a grateful disposition but is resolved to be pope himself, and
“ will allow no man to govern him : he will neither be Spaniard
“ nor Frenchman, but as is thought will maintain his independ-
“ ence for the benefit of Christianity and the holy see.” His
vigorous administration began from the day of his election, for
he would release no prisoners as was usual, saying that the city
was already too full of knaves: condemning Gregory’s negligence
he commenced a severe course of justice, threatening in plain
terms to “ *Play for heads against the disobedient.*” Meanwhile
fresh sources of dissension arose between the Grand Duke and
cardinal from their clashing interests at the papal court where
the latter maintained his influence ; but Paulo Giordano Orsini,
still doubtful of the pope, retired into Lombardy and soon died,
leaving Vittoria Accoromboni almost all his property. Virginio
Orsini was then educating at Florence and Ferdinand en-
deavoured to get the will cancelled by papal authority when
the widow’s tragical end saved him all further trouble. Lodovico
Orsini a kinsman of the deceased and angry at Paulo’s marriage,
became the declared enemy of Vittoria and her brothers, and on the
twenty-second of December 1585 forty masked ruffians with false
beards surrounded her house, broke in by the windows, and
having struck Flaminio Accoromboni dead with a pistol-shot,
entered his sister’s chamber who fell on her knees in an agony
of terror and tremblingly implored the murderers to pause in
mercy while she prayed to God. She was answered by a dagger
in her heart! But the city was almost immediately thrown into
alarm and tumult ; the gates were shut, guards placed in every
street, the convents searched, and Vittoria’s servants examined.
From these the magistrates learned that some of Lodovico’s
followers were amongst the murderers, on which he was cited to
appear but refused, and barricaded his house: an advocate was
despatched from Venice to conduct the prosecution, yet Orsini
held out until two pieces of artillery were brought to bear

upon his residence. He was instantly tried, and condemned to be strangled three hours after the sentence; he employed the interval in writing to his wife and arranging his affairs, and then died with great tranquillity.

The devotion of Francesco to Bianca, amusements, and the aggrandizement of Don Antonio, who with a revenue
A.D. 1586. of 60,000 ducats was inferior only to the sovereign himself fretted both Ferdinand and Don Pietro and made the latter again listen to proposals of marriage. At a comedy acted on the celebration of his sister Virginia's wedding the appearance of Camilla Martelli by the Grand Duke's permission created a strong sensation amongst the Florentines: her still beautiful countenance, her hard fate of twelve years' rigorous confinement, and the newly-awakened recollections of Cosimo which her presence excited, drew all eyes upon her in pity and admiration, and sharpened public hatred against her persecutor; the more so when it became known that he had worked on maternal affection so as to make her relinquish all that Cosimo had bequeathed, in order that part of Vittoria's dowry might be saved. Her appearance was a signal for the most marked attentions from Ferdinand, Don Pietro, and all the principal Florentines, who hated Francesco; but her triumph was short, for as soon as the nuptials terminated the unfortunate Camilla was remanded to her convent in despite of every effort of her friends; the Grand Duke moreover hinted that Don Pietro's eagerness arose from something beyond common respect for his father's wife, a conjecture far from improbable as regarded *him*; but Camilla was not a Medici! Ferdinand had already procured from Sixtus a relaxation of the extreme rigour of monastic rules in her favour, but the Grand Duke's authority prevented any beneficial effect, and she gradually fell into bad health and despondency without ever softening the malignant feelings of Francesco*.

* Galluzzi, Lib. iv., cap. vi.

His disappointment at a fancied miscarriage of Bianca in 1587 hastened a reconciliation with Ferdinand which through the means of the Archbishop of Florence was completed, and immediately after this he was offered the crown of Poland : but Francis was of far too mean a spirit to be tempted by projects of hazardous ambition however honourable, and though flattered by the offer ; which was to his riches not his person ; he feared to expose Tuscany to Spanish aggression in support of the Archduke Maximilian, between whom and the Crown Prince of Sweden then lay the contest. Wherefore declining this dangerous honour he bespoke the suffrages of the deputation in favour of Maximilian, and made the most of his disinterested services and self-denial to both branches of the house of Austria, but without any effect. The Cardinal of Medicis, in consequence of his reconciliation with Francesco, repaired to Florence where he was welcomed with every mark of hospitality and even affection, and accompanied his brother to the villa of Poggio a Caiano. Here both Princes, Bianca, and the Cardinal Archbishop of Florence lived for some days in the utmost harmony, the Grand Duchess and Cardinal of Florence exerting themselves to maintain this friendly intercourse when a sudden and fatal accident changed the scene. The Grand Duke had been out sporting with unusually violent exercise and while still heated sat down to rest in a cold situation close by a piece of water ; he there got a chill and consequent fever which he insisted on managing himself : on the ninth day it took a serious turn and became violent during forty-nine hours of great suffering when on the nineteenth of October 1587 he expired. A "*post mortem*" examination showed the liver and viscera in a diseased state evidently caused by the manner of life he led and the extreme imprudence and irregularity in diet : cold indigestible meats, highly-seasoned dishes, strong wines and everlasting cordials ; distilled waters of every kind, iced and acidulated drinks, amongst others nitric acid in

great quantities; salads, and all sorts of crude indigestible vegetables; such was the style of the Grand Duke's living, which having been continued for many years was considered quite sufficient to account for the state of internal decay that presented itself, leaving no cause for suspicion of poison. Bianca fell sick eleven hours after him with a hoarseness followed by fever, which increased her husband's malady by the impossibility of attending to him as she was wont. Her attack proved less severe, but she had lived much the same kind of life, with a constitution still further weakened by the use of fecundating medicines: for two years also she had been suffering from symptoms of incipient dropsy which deceived Francesco, notwithstanding all her assertions to the contrary, into the fallacious hope of a successor. Bianca's inquiries for her husband were incessant; she used always to say that "*between her death and his, hours, not days had to run, one dying first the other after.*" When he expired they tried to conceal it, but she was far too anxious, and continued deception became impossible: the aspect of those about her, outside whisperings, low sounds in the passages, and the slow rolling of carriages in the court below, all awaked her senses to the truth, and the wet flushed cheeks of her attendants confirmed the tale. For a while she hid her head under the bed-clothes, faintly murmuring a few broken sentences; subsequently with an affectionate exclamation she calmly said, "*And I too must die with my lord.*" Then giving one deep and long-drawn sigh she remained silent, and died eleven hours after her husband. When Francis became aware of his approaching death he sent for Ferdinand and asked his forgiveness; he then gave him the countersigns of the several fortresses, and recommended Bianca and Don Antonio to his care along with his ministers and most faithful servants. Ferdinand lost no time in taking possession of the strongholds, or in assembling the militia and ordering the city guard under arms to meet any disturbance; but the moment that his brother

ceased to exist, leaving Bianca in charge of her daughter and son-in-law assisted by the Bishop Abbioso with orders to conceal the event he hastened to assume the government.

The body of Bianca Cappello was by his command opened in presence of the above named persons and the physicians, in order to avoid any suspicion about himself, and the result was analogous to that of her husband with the addition of strong dropsical affections : yet the coincidence in the time and manner of their death with the general character of the age and family, generated many rumours of foul play without any apparent foundation. Bianca has been accused of wanting to poison the cardinal with a tart of her own making, and it was said that she had been long seeking the opportunity in consequence of a previous attempt of his to poison her when he first discovered her marriage; that seeing the Grand Duke eat by mistake of the poisoned dish she determined not to survive him and eat of it too, but the cardinal was preserved by a ring which according to the superstition of the time was believed by a change of colour to give notice of poison. Others say that the food lay untouched on his plate while conversing with Bianca, and that Francis entering hungry from the chace eat heartily of the fatal dish ere she could prevent him. Others again accuse Ferdinand of having poisoned both and pretending to send for assistance allowed them to expire in agony without it. These like all similar tales had probably some foundation in fact; the tart was perhaps no invention though the poison was : a subtle poison, such as Bianca is said to have used, would hardly have been eleven days about its work and then do it so obscurely as not to be detected by science. On the contrary there seems to be strong ground for belief that a malady arising partly from imprudence, partly from the season and local influences, acting on debilitated constitutions of similar habits already predisposed to disease, was the immediate cause of death. There were other stories of about equal value, and what probably gave occasion

to them was an attempt made at first to conceal the Grand Duke's illness: but all sorts of rumours having been early afloat in the Roman atmosphere it became necessary to dissipate them by an official Report issued three days before his death which described the progress of disease and the apprehensions entertained in consequence. The author of this Report does not appear, but it proves that the patients were regularly attended, and that until near its close the illness was not thought to be dangerous.

The bodies were removed to Florence on the twentieth and twenty-first of October, both having been exposed to public view, that of Francis was privately buried in the family vaults, public honours being reserved to a more convenient season. But when the architect Buontalenti asked Ferdinand if the Grand Duchess's body should also be exposed crowned, to public view, he unfeelingly answered, that "She had lived long enough and worn the crown as long as she ought." And when asked where she should be buried, "*Where you please*" was his answer "*where you please; we will not have her amongst us.*" Her body was therefore wrapped in a winding-sheet and cast into the common charnel house amongst the lowest classes of the people; or according to Galluzzi, and probably with more truth, into the vaults of San Lorenzo, but so secretly that no traces of her could ever be discovered *. Thus terminated the eventful life of Bianca Cappello a woman with many faults and let us hope some virtues: thrown while yet a mere girl into temptation distress and danger, with a warm heart and strong sensibility, her natural protector false despicable and utterly selfish; assailed by luxury high rank and immorality, by suffering and unwonted hardships; reduced from the splendour and refinement of exalted station to perform the menial offices of a starving household,

* *Vide* "Lettera dal Signore Vettor Soderini all Illust. Signore Silvio Piccolomini," Firenze, 21^o Dicembre, 1587, MS. in the "*Origine e Descen-* denza della Casa de' Medici," fol. 307.—Galluzzi, Lib. iv., cap. viii.—Mecatti, vol. ii^o.—Muratori, *Annali*, Anno 1587.

a youthful prince at her feet, with the indistinct glimmer of a throne in the distance, she finally sank under temptation and became, probably not all that her enemies have described her. In an age of infidelity she was at least faithful to the Grand Duke, and probably would have been faithful to her husband had he taken any pains to keep her so. The parasitic ministers of Francis soon opened out their blossoms before the rising sun of Ferdinand, revealing their own intrigues along with the secrets of Bianca and her husband, and the new sovereign with unworthy spite ordered the destruction of everything that could recall her to the public recollection, a proceeding which tells more in her favour than against her! Even her armorial bearings were erased from the escutcheon of the Medici and replaced by those of Austria; and when obliged to mention Bianca's name, Ferdinand would neither use nor allow the title of Grand Duchess to be given, but even in a public act about the birth of Don Antonio repeatedly denominated her "*La Pessima Bianca*" *.

Francesco I. died at forty-seven years of age after a regency of ten and a reign of thirteen years: his only surviving children were Eleonora Princess of Mantua, and Maria, afterwards Queen of France, who was about twelve years old at his decease: Don Antonio his reputed son, Virginio, and his sister Eleonora Orsini, were educated together at the court of Florence. Francesco de' Medici in addition to his own defects had all Cosimo's vices without either his good qualities or talents; Spain was his study and Philip II. his model: cruel, weak, obstinate, avaricious, vindictive and implacable, he lived detested and died unregretted, and the shouts of joy at Ferdinand's exaltation were rather for deliverance from one, than any expectation of better times from another Medici. Squibs, epigrams, and satires flew through the city showing the drift of public opinion, for the free but ephemeral moment of transition was a political

* Galluzzi, Lib. iv., cap. viii.

Saturnalia, and sharp flashes of old republican license darted here and there across the atmosphere, but more in abuse of the dead than praise or hope of the living. The Medici were accused in biting verse of being apart from every wish to do good; of cruelty both to themselves and others; of fattening on public misery; and it was added with keen mockery that the *lion* and the *wolf* would now under the cloak of Saint Peter exchange long lamentation for sport and gaiety*. About two thousand petitions were presented to the new sovereign within a few days, principally filled with complaints of oppression and misrule by his brother's ministers; numbers of secret informations followed, in which, not the ministers' conduct alone but the vice, negligence, and atrocity of his predecessor were plainly exhibited, and justice sternly demanded!

Kings and princes from the vicious nature of their education are entitled to a milder judgment than private persons, and whenever they break the bounds of their false and isolated position and show themselves rational and feeling men, they merit all the praise which the world is generally too willing to bestow: their vices also when confined to the court circle, (if such a thing be possible) may be passed over in silence and regret; but when they are ostentatiously displayed in all the glare of rank and power; when public morality is tainted by them, and justice torn from its high position while public good is trampled on; then the world should show no mercy, but drive them from their throne and hold them up as awful examples to posterity. Bianca Cappello has been commonly accused as a principal cause of the infamous government of Francis and was believed to be the devil that possessed him, as if a Medici required a devil! His constant love, the least unamiable part of his character, no doubt enslaved him to her will, and as

* The *Lion* of Florence, or "*Marzocco*," and the *Wolf* of Siena, the device of that city being a wolf suck-
ling Romulus and Remus as in ancient Rome. By the "*Cloak of Saint Peter*" was meant the Cardinalship.

women are capricious and more often governed by the heart than the head, it is probable that she caused many changes, whether for good or evil, in the government; but it requires more authentic and explicit documents than have yet reached us to judge honestly of the mischief imputed to her, and the historian of the "*Granducato*" has no right to entail on Bianca's memory all the wickedness of Francesco's reign without producing a single authority to substantiate the charge. But, from whatever cause, the rule of Francis I. was weak, tyrannical, and equally odious to the capital and the provinces: many of the principal citizens quitted the country under various pretexts to fly from the misery that prevailed there, and many others who suddenly disappeared from society were mourned as secret victims of his cruelty. Cosimo was hated, but respected and feared both at home and abroad; Francis was flattered for his wealth and ridiculed for his puerile vanity: he became the golden-egged goose which Philip was prompt to use and much too wise to destroy. At Florence he completely obliterated the faint shadow of republicanism left by Cosimo and clutched hard at every remnant of authority. Cosimo really possessed it all but was content to leave the forms and apparently some discretionary power; Francis swept even shades away and tyrannized in despotic pleasure. The Supreme Council had dwindled to a mere tribunal of justice; the inferior courts acted in their own name but by the sovereign's rescript; criminal jurisdiction was still exercised by the ancient tribunal of THE EIGHT, but under a permanent secretary who soon became the sole depositary of power in an ever-changing court. The finance department was all concentrated in a single minister: there was a general of infantry and a general of cavalry; but Francis, unfettered by any permanent council, governed through the favourite of the day. Cosimo really did all himself, and did it thoroughly too; Francis imagined he did so, and was mistaken, for he was not that tall and branchless tree which leaves no hold

to the parasite. When old Concino retired he for some time personally directed the politics of his cabinet ; they were simple, because he reposed on the embroidered cushions of Spanish authority and had only to supply the gold, which was extracted from his subjects. But unsteady in his favour, suspicious, forgetful of services, he frequently changed ministers, and yet was served by many able men : of these were the younger Concini, and more especially Carlo Pozzo, who hated by the people for his severe loyalty, was deserted by Francis in return, but though so rigid an Auditor Fiscal that in the satires of the day, he is accused of being sufficiently austere to make even our Saviour wicked ! As Archbishop of Pisa being still faithful to his patron Ferdinand he incurred Francesco's enmity who prevented his being made Cardinal. Paulo Vinto succeeded as Auditor with less odium because with less work, for Pozzo had cleared his way in a department where all was odious. Siena was essentially governed like Florence but the Seignory still resided in the public palace with all the ancient republican forms : the governor represented the sovereign in all his power, and a captain of justice presided over the criminal department of state : there was also an Auditor Fiscal with other magistrates, all depending on the governor, though apparently ruled by the Seignory. The household servants were in general confined to mere court duties yet occasionally intrusted with important missions : the court itself was maintained in splendour : a number of gentlemen divided in two departments attended the various branches of the household : sixty pages of the principal families of Italy and Germany were maintained and educated at the palace in all the accomplishments and depravity of the day, but still without neglecting the arts and sciences or the use of arms, equitation, and all the various acquirements of a gentleman. A certain number of old military officers enjoyed honours and pensions and under the name of "*Lance Spezzati*" (Free Lances or Body Guard) followed the court and were

prompt to execute any commissions of the sovereign which required courage fidelity and unscrupulousness.

The desire of Francis was to mould his court into the feudal form like those of transalpine nations : he therefore endeavoured to attract the border chiefs to Florence by a distribution of dignities while he secured greater obedience to his government : in this way he was served by the Borboni of Monte Santa Maria, the Alidosi of Castel del Rio, the Counts of Carpegna, Montedoglio, and other feudal chiefs who held of the ancient republic : he also attracted many Lombard and Roman gentlemen to his court in order to establish a correspondence with the powerful families of every state in Italy. Such was the general character of the Tuscan court and government under Francis I. a subject scarcely worth record except as a connecting link in the heavy chain of Medician history.

COTEMPORARY MONARCHS.—England : Elizabeth.—Scotland : Mary until February 1587 ; then James VI.—France : Henry III.—Spain : Philip II.—Portugal : Henry the Cardinal, from 1578 to 1580 ; then Anthony Prior of Crato who was deposed by Philip II. of Spain the same year.—German Emperor : Maximilian II. until 1576 ; then Rodolph II.—Sicily and Naples : Philip II. of Spain.—Popes : Gregory XIII. until 1585 ; then Sixtus V.—Turkey : Sultan Selim II.—Poland : Sigismund III.—Savoy : Charles Emanuel.

CHAPTER VII.

FROM A.D. 1587 TO A.D. 1609.



FERDINAND THE FIRST,

GRAND DUKE OF TUSCANY.

ACCORDING to republican institutions the only title to distinction in Florence was enjoyment of public office and honours from which the feudal nobility were excluded; and
A.D. 1587. this law seems not to have been abrogated by the Medici; yet in consequence of both Cosimo's and Francesco's desire to give a strong feudal character to their court the senators, who had hitherto been considered of the highest rank, now saw themselves overshadowed by a new aristocracy which though ineligible to the honours of citizenship were loaded with those of the sovereign. The noblest and richest of Florence were divided between the attractions of a court and the civic dignities of their country, which however some of them renounced for the acquisition of feudal possessions; thus a court and a city party commenced, and along with it much envy and animosity in the capital. Cosimo, born and educated under the republic, did not entirely discard its equality when on the throne; Francis on the contrary was like his mother imbued with Spanish pride and Spanish customs; and the habits of that nation are described as tending to recall the ferocity of times which had once been, rather than to soften the manners of those that were. Libertinage which revelled unchecked at court was repressed with extreme severity in all inferior stations, and this urged the

people to greater excesses: the revolting rigour with which every trifling infringement of fiscal laws was punished and the incessant vexations on this account, spread such terror, that a current saying of the day represented the Gabelle of Florence and the Inquisition at Rome as the two things best adapted to disturb the quiet of mankind. Discontent at these severities was one cause of robber-bands swarming on both frontiers but especially the papal, where outlaws from Venice Naples and Tuscany combined to augment their numbers. Francis would have employed his own at Pisa Leghorn and Porto Ferrajo, but the pope having been compelled to take arms the whole mass was driven back on the Tuscan frontier and obliged him to join in their destruction. Agreements were made for a mutual restitution of prisoners according to their nation; prices were set on the head of each; and all this becoming permanent, a system of authorized assassination, blood, and terror, spread throughout the land: but though any robber could purchase his own safety by murdering another, it was remarked that they still remained faithful so that something beyond mere plunder was suspected; and they were in fact encouraged by the Spanish garrisons to outrage Tuscany, one of their chiefs being also in communication with Lesdiguieres the Huguenot governor of Dauphiny. In the ecclesiastical states spiritual as well as temporal power was adopted for their destruction, the pope endeavouring amidst general disorder to extend the former into Tuscany and exercise some acts of clerical jurisdiction that might form a good precedent for future claims. From time immemorial this had been the great papal wedge, and no occasion was ever neglected to introduce it or afterwards drive it home; but the Grand Duke was then awake, and stubborn upon every point of jurisdiction, promptly and sternly repelling all such attempts, and so far deserved the esteem of his subjects more than his more able and better principled successor. Although jealous of

ecclesiastical encroachments he at first received with favour some deputies of the congregation appointed by Pius V. and continued by Gregory XIII. to execute certain reforms ordered by the council of Trent. They were generally welcomed in the belief that their mission was church reform, and aid was ordered to be given to them by all local authorities provided that no interference took place with lay affairs or government jurisdiction. But the Prince soon became aware that reform was the Pope's last object ; the first being to extend papal jurisdiction and revenue, to get the papal fingers into the Monte di Pietà, public hospitals, and fraternities, interfere with the patronage of both prince and laity, and encroach on civil jurisdiction. By the republic all these had been studiously kept apart from ecclesiastical authority in their worldly business, and so jealous was it on this point that when the mendicant orders first appeared on Florentine ground they were expressly excluded from every temporal jurisdiction, even over their own affairs, by the appointment of a civil magistracy to superintend the building and repairs and administer the finances of each convent from whatever source they might be drawn. The grand dukes acted in the same spirit, but the friars were sufficiently dexterous to slip from this control, leaving it with the mere superintendence of buildings and repairs, while most other religious establishments continued under ducal authority. Amongst these were the numerous lay fraternities who were united for devout purposes and had acquired considerable property: they had really no connexion with ecclesiastical authority; but in the eyes of the latter their possessions had, and proportionably increased the value of their souls! These possessions at once attracted the apostolic visitors, who under pretence of correcting abuses wanted to reduce every pious and charitable establishment to ecclesiastical rule in order to command the surplus revenues of each, and even began to nibble at the order of San Stefano. Francis at length became exaspe-

rated, forbid the local authorities to assist them, ordered that they should not be obeyed, remonstrated with the pope, and sternly demanded their recall. Violent disputes and opposition followed in the provinces; censures and excommunication succeeded, and the apostolical visitor at Siena, who had become peculiarly obnoxious, was threatened with forcible expulsion. The pope would do nothing but modify the system, and Francis seeing his drift resolved on open opposition, declining to be answerable for any violence that might be committed against a visitor who had already been warned of his danger. On this the pontiff requested that for an example to other princes the visitation might be permitted to terminate quietly, sending the Bishop of Rimini as a more conciliating personage: he proved far otherwise, yet to avoid an open rupture was received but followed the traces of the first so closely that at Barga even the nuns chased him from their convent with staves, outcries, and considerable hazard of his life. The Grand Duke added a severe reprimand and forbid his inspecting the books of the various institutions of Volterra and other places: the heads of these establishments and all those who assisted them were consequently excommunicated and Francis in return threatened an instant expulsion of the bishop if not immediately recalled *. This vigour succeeded, but to save the pope's credit his nuncio was ordered to terminate the visitation, and this he peacefully accomplished. Seven years after, in 1582 when a similar visitation took place, Francis stipulated that it should confine itself to churches and convents alone, and refrain from all lay institutions and patronage; yet the consequence was un-mixed evil; the clergy were not reformed according to the decrees of Trent; ancient laws and customs were confused, and entangled with new and puzzling regulations, and continual appeals to Rome were the result; the great object of that court being to

* *Vide* Letters of Francis to the Cardinal of Medici and the Bishop of Rimini, May 1576, apud Galluzzi, Lib. iv., cap. ix.

encourage these appeals and thus absorb the bishops' local authority. The "Congregation" or ecclesiastical court already existing at Rome for interpreting and executing the decrees of council, was also charged with the revision of these visitations and therefore became the arbitrator of all disputed episcopal jurisdiction and ancient clerical privilege, as well as both judge and party in each appeal, and the result may be imagined. The Grand Duke either satisfied with his exertions to protect lay rights, or blind to the consequences; perhaps shy of meddling with things purely ecclesiastical; allowed this to continue until the bishops finding almost all their diocesan authority thus absorbed by the Roman congregation and themselves only permitted to act according to the will of that body, became exclusively attached to the source of power and ceased to consider themselves as belonging to the Tuscan community or having any thing to do with the political system of that country. Thence sprung up an indifference to the honour and independence of the state, a slender obedience to the Prince and an eagerness to do homage to their new masters, whose power though not formally acknowledged began its silent exercise throughout Italy by means of the bishops, now merely their deputies. Confusion and ambiguity between civil and ecclesiastical jurisdiction and a general uncertainty about the rights and possessions of either, spread throughout the Peninsula but religious discipline gained no ground, for as disputes warmed, priestly arrogance swelled, until at last it burst its allegiance, contemned the sovereign, and acknowledged no authority but the courts of Rome. In this revolt the friars shone conspicuous seconded as they were by Gregory XIII. who granted them many privileges, and by the superstition or devotion of the people who poured wealth into the hands of those orders which openly professed and affected to despise it *. The Jesuits of Siena exasperated everybody by their insolence and disgusted the public

* Galluzzi, Lib. iv., cap. ix.

by their proselytism ; the Florentine monks of Saint Mark re-awakened the memory and spirit of Savonarola which had slept since 1571 ; for whether in life or death this singular man struck his own enthusiasm deep into his followers' minds, and though stamped and trampled upon it was never eradicated but sprouted vigorously at every change. His doctrines now laid hold of youth and age ; friars, nuns, and secular clergy imbibed his tenets ; his relics were exhibited, there was a low whispering of miracles performed by them, and he became once more a martyr, a saint, and a prophet : his image was struck in bronze and in gold, cut in gems, sculptured in brass and copper, and all his freest opinions were discussed in the private society of Florence. The ruling powers of Church and State were apprehensive of two evils from this ; an alienation from the papal authority and an expansion of republican principles involving hatred to the race of Medici. Of these enthusiasts were Pandolfo Pucci and his companions, against whom Francesco took so sure and bloody a revenge for a conspiracy already abandoned *.

Amongst the greatest sufferers by the Roman visitations were the poorer orders of nuns whose chief means of existence was public charity : new and severe regulations confined them closely to their convents, which in many instances were without gardens, and nearly reduced them to absolute starvation. In Florence alone twenty-eight convents containing two thousand five hundred and twenty-one sisters, some of which had only two hundred and eighty dollars of rent to support a hundred and sixty nuns, and hampered by a thousand dollars of debt, were reduced to a state of famine : the whole city instantly flew to their succour but the aid was uncertain, ephemeral, and insufficient ; it was but the impulse of a moment, and much misery and disorder still followed ; at Siena things were worse and the poison of

* *Vide* Letter of the Archbishop of Florence (a Medici and afterwards Leo XI.) to the Grand Duke Fran-
cesco I., August 1583, *Galluzzi*, Lib. iv., cap. ix.

Roman priestcraft infected all Tuscany. Nor was this the only vexation which sprung from papal encroachment: Cosimo allowed Pius V. to send inquisitors of the Franciscan order to Florence Pisa and Siena, but with powers so limited that they had no private prisons, and when executing theological justice were compelled to apply to the civil power, giving the culprit's name and the cause of condemnation. This did not agree with the overbearing spirit of the Holy Office: it cramped the inquisitor's efforts: it thwarted his ambition and killed his hopes; for no way then existed so short and sure to the cardinalate as a rigid exercise of inquisitorial power. At Florence under the sovereign's eye there were few complaints, but at Pisa and Siena continual quarrels with the civil power compelled the Grand Duke to insist on the inquisitor's recall: he was succeeded by one equally obnoxious; and to increase their official influence these inquisitors established lay brotherhoods in all the principal cities of Italy with the sole object of assisting them and disseminating their poison. Men and women of every condition were admitted into these societies; they were distinguished by a red cross on their dress, and thence called "*Crocesegnati*;" they engaged themselves to aid the Holy Office against all heretics and their supporters, and for this they received indulgences, great facilities for absolution, and many exemptions. In Sicily, Venice, Milan, Ferrara and Bologna these societies already existed, and in 1579 an attempt was made to introduce them at Siena: the governor Montaute, then grown old and weak, allowed this but the people complained, and Francesco at once forbid it with expressions of strong indignation followed by a demand for the inquisitor's recall. This was granted, but another equally audacious succeeded who established inquisitorial vicars in every village and spread dismay throughout the land. Compelled to remove these satellites, he still burned with so hot a zeal as to make him walk through the city on Fridays, smelling at every house to detect if possible the odour of meat

in the several kitchens! In Pisa similar doings were in full activity, and an evident inclination was shown to destroy both universities by repeated accusations and punishments; inquisitor after inquisitor went and came but the system remained unchanged, the nuisance unabated.

Francis I. was strictly economical, but inexorable in his demands on the people: his revenue in 1576 was calculated at 1,200,000 golden crowns out of which he was supposed to save a quarter: it does not appear that he laid any new taxes on the nation after Cosimo's death, but he made those permanent which his father intended to be temporary: he lent 1,000,000 of ducats to the house of Austria, and Pratolino is said to have cost almost as much more: if to these are added the enormous expense of his second marriage, and that of Don Antonio's principality, some idea may be formed of the vast resources of so small a state; but the continual and unrelenting severity of his financial system was terrible to his subjects and often unfruitful to himself, especially after commercial enterprise began to relapse into the original languor from which Cosimo had awakened it. While he continued Cosimo's system of encouragement, without extraneous checks, the gains of trade enabled people generally to sustain excessive taxation; but when, as in 1580, a sudden failure of commerce filled Tuscany with dread, when numerous bankruptcies carried ruin through the manufactories, and industry lay prostrate; then the burden became intolerable; the people cried for bread, and they received a stone. As the rapid shooting of the commercial tree was mainly produced by a combination of accidental circumstances and Cosimo's sagacity, it withered as quickly when the nourishment ceased, and Pisa which had swelled under these influences to a population of twenty-two thousand souls when that Duke died, had dwindled down to eight thousand at the death of his successor.

Purely commercial nations are essentially less stable than

those which principally depend on agriculture for their prosperity: their existence though brilliant is ephemeral; they are vitally affected by external changes, and any alteration in the relative position of nations may turn them from the highest to the lowest spoke in the wheel of fortune. Florence from a combination of outward events and internal energy advanced in commercial prosperity until the beginning of the sixteenth century: a second combination which had been gradually forming, coupled with internal disorders, threw her back to worse than her original condition, for the reign of Cosimo was only a convulsive struggle produced by his galvanic energy of character. As the mercantile prosperity of the north-western nations increased, that of the south diminished, and Florence in its turn began to decay; but the revolutions of Flanders and civil wars of France rolled back the tide of commerce again on Italy whence it could more safely find its way to the interior of Europe. Lisbon too became the emporium for East Indian and American merchandise and distributed it to other nations; and even until the conquest of Portugal by Philip II. the revived commerce of Tuscany flowed onward in full stream; but the stronghold of Florence, the city of Lyon, from having been the centre of exchange between Italy and Flanders; Spain and Germany; had sunk to comparative insignificance. Besides the blows already noticed aimed at it by Charles V. the foreign merchants were robbed by both parties in France according as each gained the ascendant, and they gradually abandoned the place; so that in 1575 the few Florentines that remained were so miserably reduced as to petition the Grand Duke for some mitigation of their taxes. Besançon and Chambery then became the principal resorts, but Henry III. of France forbid the Lyonese merchants to correspond with those cities, and the German towns most convenient for exchange were interdicted to the Italians on account of the reformed religion. Gregory XIII. ordered all who were established at Nuremburg to settle at Ratisbon

and on Torregiani a Florentine refusing obedience application was made to compel him. All such obstacles tended to set the stream of commerce along the shores of Spain and Portugal, and there the Florentines traded and settled in security: by these channels Francis endeavoured to attract the pepper trade and other East India commodities to Leghorn where he wished them to meet the Levant trade; in the former he partly succeeded and the security of his own private galleons insured their employment before any other carriers: in the latter he failed, for Venice was still unrivalled; but between Leghorn and Alexandria some slight commercial intercourse revived.

The death of King Sebastian of Portugal with the consequent war and conquest of that kingdom in 1580 threw its commerce into confusion; English, French, and Dutch privateers intercepted everything; the only security for Philip's loans being royal cargoes from India and America, everything became doubly precarious, and his Florentine creditors found themselves suddenly involved in all the hazards of a war to which they were utter strangers; the result was that bankruptcies multiplied in Florence, and Francis vainly thinking to subdue misfortune by severity, issued cruel laws against them.

By an act of the year 1582 all bankrupts were ordered to place themselves in prison three days after their failure; if they did so the way was open to justification; if not without any further inquiry they were pronounced dishonest, became subject with their family and descendants, to the most rigorous penalties, besides any personal chastisement which the criminal court might please to inflict on them; they being considered as public delinquents who had made away with other men's property. The grandfather, father, sons and descendants of the honest bankrupt were held answerable for him in goods and person if one year before his failure the two first had not protested that they had no interest in the business, and if the last were not emancipated from paternal authority. The sons and all male

descendants of fraudulent bankrupts, though born afterwards were declared infamous, and deprived, like those of the honest bankrupt, of all civic rights and privileges as Florentine citizens, including eligibility to public office ! Their wives, children, servants and even their neighbours might by the seventeenth provision of this act be arrested incarcerated and punished at the magistrate's discretion ; the creditors, however mercifully inclined, were deprived of all power of even mitigating the penalties ; and assistance given to the bankrupt by any person, or even the mere act of affording him shelter, was visited by heavy fines, and what further punishment the magistrates should think fit to inflict *. There are in this formidable act nineteen provisions of cruel unjust and impolitic legislation, and the result was emigration of Tuscan merchants and the investment of their property in other climes less noxious to its fructification. An alteration in the Spanish and Italian currency about this period and a hoard of five millions of gold in the Castle of Saint Angelo, by reducing the circulation of money augmented general suffering and almost ruined the Tuscan commerce.

All foreigners were encouraged to trade and settle at Leghorn, but more particularly the English, who had the privilege of residing and travelling in every part of Tuscany without molestation ; the only restriction imposed on them was not to become pirates against Christians, or carry Turkish or Jewish merchandise under the protection of their flag, and Queen Elizabeth in return abolished the duty on alum which had been a great impediment to Florentine traffic in that commodity. Francis was on the point of farming the Spanish pepper trade when he died, for like Cosimo he drew great profits from his private commerce, a most pernicious practice, but where the state was the person of the prince it perhaps saved some vexatious imposts. He not only entered largely into foreign dealings but,

* " *Leggi e Bandi di Toscana,*" Legge del Senato, 20 Aprile 1582.

under feigned names, into public contracts with Rome, besides many private speculations both at home and abroad as a partner in mercantile firms of acknowledged reputation. Like Cosimo too his favourite merchandise was jewellery which he managed entirely himself, being a perfect judge, and vain of possessing the most valuable and rarest jewels in the world. The freightage of his galleons was another source of revenue, and banks at both Rome and Venice extended the circle of his foreign profits, while at home he entered the retail market in competition with his own subjects, opening several shops under the plea of public convenience where all the commonest necessities of life were sold on his account. He was the greatest corn merchant in Tuscany, and held an immense granary at Pisa as a magazine for his purchases in the Maremma and Sicily which were afterwards distributed through Italy, and even reached Portugal in exchange for Indian produce. The importation of raw silk also was a rich source of private gain, and the galleys of San Stefano made an annual voyage to collect it in Sicily and Calabria for Francesco and other Tuscan merchants; but the unsteady market for this article in the Neapolitan states, arising from quarrels competition and fluctuating duties, affected the Florentine manufacture and induced Francis to cultivate the white mulberry tree in Tuscany. By a law of 1576 every landholder was compelled to plant four mulberry trees for every pair of oxen in each "*Podere*" or farm, and this was followed up by others which imposed a heavy duty on the exportation of native raw silk as well as on the importation of the foreign manufactured article, giving a forced and ephemeral prosperity to that trade while the cloth manufacture proportionately declined*.

The competition of a despotic prince or any government in the trade of a country is always injurious, and probably accelerated the fall of Tuscan commerce: resources so vast

* Leggi e Bandi di Toscana, Bando, 16 Giugno, 1576.

like a wide-spreading tree overshadowed all the smaller sprouts and absorbed their nourishment. Francesco's mercantile profits must have been enormous, and a vast amount of wealth was found at his decease in the fortress of Belvedere : Ferdinand was prudent in concealing the real sum of coined gold and silver from the king of Spain, from his own brother, and the nation ; but the mass of manufactured articles in the precious metals and in jewellery was a matter of notoriety. It was then believed and is recorded in cotemporary manuscripts that no less than 5,000,000 of coined gold and 700,000 dollars besides a vast amount of jewels were shown to him by Bernardo Buonarruoti who had charge of the treasure ; so that the golden age was said to be come back again *.

It was a principle of Cosimo's and Francesco's governments that Florence should be supplied by the surplus produce of Siena which province was always held distinct and subordinate, and to be made use of only for the benefit of the Florentine state. No encouragement was given to manufactures in that country, and as no money could make its way there except in exchange for surplus produce the least impediment to agriculture was keenly felt. The avarice of Francesco made him put a double duty on the exportation of agricultural products, for Cosimo had already deprived the Senese of a permanent free trade in grain, granting it or not as the necessity of Florence prompted. Francis by this duty expected to double his profits, but diminished cultivation instead : the cause was not immediately perceived, and schemes of various kinds were proposed as remedies when the two little words "*Free trade*" would have cured all ! It was observed that private property in the Florentine state appeared better cultivated than that of corporations, wherefore all such domains in the Senese territory were divided into private holdings with certain privileges, in expectation of a

* *Vide* Lettera da Gio. Vittorio Soderini a Silvio Piccolomini, MS., Firenze, 21 Dicembre, 1587, as given in "*Origine e Descendenza della Casa de' Medici* ;" also Galluzzi, Lib. iv., cap. x.

similar result. Speculators were allured by cheap purchases, activity and enterprise began to awaken; houses were built, woods cleared, vines and olives planted, and everybody except the natives expected an age of prosperity. The Senese alone were incredulous; they declared that cattle and corn were their staple commodities, the best adapted to the soil and national habits, and only required commercial liberty to be produced in the greatest abundance. While the Florentines accused them of envy and indolence and the discussion was still loud, the entire failure of this scheme decided the question: for the colonists seeing their capital spent, their labour useless, their expectations blasted, and money yet due for the original purchase, abandoned the enterprise and left the country more impoverished than before.

Nevertheless about the year 1578 an agricultural spirit began to exhibit itself at Florence: the sovereign's example, the academical lectures, and discussions of literary men, the subsequent decline of trade, reason interest and fashion in short, all united in a general movement towards rustic labours. The Grand Duke, who was a botanist, introduced new plants from various countries, amongst them the sugar-cane, but could not succeed in its Tuscan cultivation. Many useless and useful laws were enacted for the encouragement of agriculture; amongst the latter was one to prevent the numerous church holidays interfering with markets; and amongst the former an interdict against gathering olives before they were ripe; a thing which would have been better left to the owner's discretion, especially as the green olive and particularly the wild olive, is considered to produce the finest oil though in smaller quantity. The tunny-fishery of Elba is also due to Francis; neither did he neglect the minerals of Tuscany; many parts had been already explored by the ancient Etrurians and still with the aid of modern science offer advantages to enterprising men: the copper mines of Monte Catin were worked under

his auspices by Germans, and the iron of Giglio was preferred to that of Elba for steel compositions, notwithstanding the great celebrity and softness of the latter.

Francis was a true Medici in his love and feeling for the fine arts; and as in all public festivities the greatest artists of the day were commissioned to design and direct the decorations, public taste became more refined and in a manner moulded to the conception enjoyment and appreciation of the most correct and chastest models; and thence probably arose that general feeling for design which still remains, even to the "*ultimo Artista*," in the conduct of public spectacles and the decoration of private houses in Florence. Buontalenti and Ammanato in architecture, Alessandro Allori and Pocetti in painting, and John of Bologna in sculpture with many other able artists threw some bright gleams across the murky reign of Francis. This prince also was the first to place a collection of paintings and statues in the present gallery while he enriched the cabinet of antiquities by numerous acquisitions, and promoted both art and literature as much as the Inquisition would allow him. The Florentine Academy maintained its reputation, and the translations of classic authors which so rapidly issued from it were read with avidity: the vanity of this society soon began to rise; they assumed the power of deciding on the purity or impurity of Tuscan composition and consequently on the praise or condemnation of authors; Philology became their principal subject of discussion, but they finally separated into several distinct societies amongst which was the celebrated "*Accademia della Crusca*:" Francesco Grazzini already mentioned as "*Il Lasca*," a man noted for his novels and their excessive indecency, originated this Academy about the year 1582. Its first act was a severe criticism on Tasso's writings which occupied all the literary world and established the notoriety if not the reputation of that particular body: the Academy's object is said to have been a malicious revenge on the poet for having abused Flo-

rence and the Medici, wherefore at the Grand Duke's command they undertook to chastise his audacity because in a dialogue called "*Il piacere onesto*" he called the Florentine gentlemen "*Nobili Artisti*," a name of which their republican ancestors were justly proud, and the government of Florence "*Giogo della nuova tirannide della Casa Medici*," an epithet that those same ancestors would have most cordially approved. The word pardon not being in the dictionary of Francis he urged on these obsequious Academicians to overwhelm the poet, who was considered by the Florentines to have come off worst from the contest. Tasso afterwards wrote verses in praise of Bianca Cappello and offered his services to Francesco; but the Medici was implacable, and after such a victory the Accademia della Crusca gave laws to Italian literature. Francis loved the society and correspondence of learned and scientific men, and having some knowledge of Alchymy Mineralogy and Botany, he promoted the study of all these branches of learning and was liberal to their professors. The Universities of Siena and Pisa although at one period considerably shaken, still flourished in despite of the Inquisition by the mere force of professorial talent; the former contained upwards of a hundred Polish and German students who governed themselves by peculiar laws and privileges, but at Pisa the students were more from Genoa and Lombardy and many distinguished professors occupied the chairs. Amongst these "*Cisalpino*" became famous, especially for his knowledge of the circulation of the blood, but he did not follow up the investigation. As Cisalpino occupied a professor's chair at Pisa about the time of Harvey's birth it is possible if not probable, considering the great intercourse between England and Tuscany at that epoch, that Harvey might have received the crude fact from Pisan records and worked out from it his own celebrated discovery*. A condemned man's body was annually

* William Harvey was born at Folkstone in Kent, A.D. 1578, and published his work on the circulation of the blood in 1628, when the intercourse with Tuscany was constant.

given to the University for dissection, and a museum of natural history formed near the botanic garden : Francis retained in his own hands the presentations to professorships, and studiously excluded monks from these responsible situations.

Detested by his subjects he was almost equally hated by the princes of Italy, even those to whom he had recently allied himself by intermarriage ; remembering former quarrels they regarded him with unfriendly aspect and Catharine of Medicis was his bitterest foe : her hate had become still more intense on account of his conduct about Duke Alexander's property, which it is said prevented her from retiring into the Florentine convent of the "*Murate*" where she had passed her early youth amidst the turbulent liberty and distresses of her country.

Ferdinand therefore both within and without was well received, and quietly mounted the throne on the twenty-fifth of October 1587 in the thirty-sixth year of his age ; after the Senate of Forty-Eight and the Council of Two Hundred had assembled together in the great hall of the public palace and administered the usual oath to him as Sovereign of Tuscany. He had left a fair fame at Rome, and assumed the government with a more favourable expression of the public mind than could well have been expected, but still accompanied by doubt suspicion and anxiety : Ferdinand however had more of his father's talent and less of his ferocity than Francis and commenced his reign with some display of justice and magnanimity : he pardoned the late ministers for their conduct towards himself and continued most of them in office : he tired and executed the Senese Captain of Justice for tyranny and extortion : he confirmed to Don Antonio all that Francis had given him, and after formally investigating and registering the story of his birth allowed him still to retain the name and arms of Medici. The persecuted Camilla Martelli had full liberty to remove from the convent to a villa assigned expressly for her use : he immediately relieved the poorer

classes from some trifling imposts which nevertheless pressed hard upon them; he expended large sums in present charity, and gave extensive employment on new works for public benefit. He was easy of access, frank and almost familiar in his manners, generous in his habits, a close investigator of public business, and generally conciliatory in act and deportment. With the Italian potentates he was open in the declaration of his opinions; he promptly renewed the alliance with Venice, satisfied the vanity of the Dukes of Urbino, Parma, and Ferrara, by unhesitatingly acknowledging their new and self-assumed titles, and calmed all the insignificant jealousies that had previously existed with the Italian princes except the Duke of Savoy, who still shrunk back to the very verge of politeness. Nor was the Grand Duke in much haste to gain the friendship of a man whose ambition and schemes of Italian conquest seriously alarmed him; for Charles Emanuel added great ability to a turbulent and utterly reckless disposition in the pursuit of his own interests, besides deep natural cunning, and powers of dissimulation fully equal to the times.

An able prince such as Ferdinand of Medicis, in the vigour of youth, politically wise, and experienced in state affairs; rich in treasure without the odium of its acquisition; commanding a powerful faction at Rome, and having no positive ill-will from his subjects; was in a position to make himself respected even in more unfavourable circumstances than European politics then presented. Spain still laboured at the Flemish war; England and Holland disputed her maritime power, injured her trade, and distracted her councils: the French monarch and half his realm opposed her, and the whole kingdom hated her: but France being perplexed and weakened by internal discord its partition became a favourite object of the Spanish cabinet, in concert with Guise and Savoy.

Germany was in no condition for disputes; Poland was a prey to the two rivals for her throne; the Turks were fully

occupied in Asia though fear still skulked along their German confines, and they were always to be watched with anxiety. Peace reigned in Italy; but the Duke of Savoy held a threatening sword over the heads of its princes: Mantua trembled for Monferrato, Genoa became uneasy, and all apprehended some outrage on Italian independence. Ferdinand consequently had nothing to fear from any quarter but Savoy, wherefore loathing his brother's servility to Spain he resolved to emancipate Tuscany from such thralldom and by uniting with the Italian princes oppose a solid mass to those who menaced the Peninsula. This was politic but not easily accomplished: the treaty of Chateau Cambresis was obsolescent and the relative position of nations changing: new times seemed to be approaching and new measures became necessary. France and Spain were both interested in the Grand Duke's conduct and opinions, the former to secure an Italian ally in case of any possible change of circumstances; the latter as they affected its Lombard states; for Philip was well aware, from Ferdinand's Roman politics and Olivarez's despatches, that he was not a man to be moulded like his brother to every fashion of the house of Austria. France as interest dictated was sincere in offers of friendship, and Catharine who had long maintained a secret correspondence with her cousin now offered all she could to exalt the Medici. Ferdinand resolved for the moment to conceal his opinions and attend to the reformation of domestic abuses while in various ways he conciliated the Italian princes: to the Tuscans he indirectly announced his intention of governing with patriarchal kindness by assuming for his device a swarm of bees encompassing their queen (believed to have no sting) and the motto "*Majestate tantum*"*. It was a promising device; and hanging the

* Medals were struck on this occasion with the above device, one of which is now in the cabinet of Mr. Pfister, of 64, King Street, Golden Square, the author of several essays in French,

German, and English, (especially in the Numismatic Journal of 1837 and 1838), on the Italian coins of the middle ages, where he proves that religion was not the sole motive which

Governor of Leghorn because he refused to surrender that fortress on the receipt of Francesco's countersign was a tolerable commentary on its meaning*!

He added Pietro Usimbardi and Pozzo Archbishop of Pisa to his ministry, recalled several of Cosimo's old servants who had been dismissed in the late reign, and altogether began well; which according to Cicero is easy; but difficult to continue. To prove the extinction of every bitter feeling the obsequies of Francis were celebrated with infinite pomp: yet it would have been well had he extended this amnesty to the shade of Bianca, but so strong was his enmity even towards her lifeless corpse, and so base the conduct of the Venetian senate, that merely to please him it forbade her family to give an adopted daughter of Saint Mark the honours of a public funeral!

Determined to quit the church and marry, Ferdinand sought for an alliance that would support the establishment and preservation of his independence; he therefore declined a proffered marriage with the German house of Austria and turned more willingly to the young Princess Christina of Lorraine the adopted child of Queen Catharine who was considered almost as a daughter of France. As the matrimonial contracts of that period were entirely political Ferdinand agreed to take her with a dowry of 600,000 crowns, the cession of all Catharine's claims on Medician property, and a transfer to Christina of her title and rights to the duchy of Urbino, which had never been annulled even when Adrian VI. restored Francesco Maria della Rovere to the dukedom. The natural tendency of Ferdinand's mind and politics were towards France whose integrity he believed essential to the balance of Europe, wherefore in 1588 Monsieur Albin came
A.D. 1588.
secretly to Florence as envoy from Queen Catharine and

dictated the types of ancient coins, and maintains that the earliest of them bearing dates are probably forgeries. This valuable collection seems well worth

the notice of those who feel any historical interest in modern numismatics.

* Muratori, *Annali*, Anno 1587.

Henry III. ; but in order not to offend Spain the Grand Duke's majordomo Orazio Rucellai was charged with the correspondence*. Don Pietro, then at Madrid, received orders to communicate this unwelcome project of marriage to Philip, whose wrath rose high against Ferdinand and was augmented by the removal of all the late sovereign's military governors amongst whom were several Spaniards ; but still more so on the Grand Duke's demands for repayment of the Tuscan loans at a time when all Europe echoed with exaggerated reports of the vast treasure found at Francesco's death. All this showed that the notions of these two brothers differed widely and Philip II. resolving on dissimulation sent Don Louis Velasco to discover Ferdinand's real intentions and offer him either an Archduchess or a Princess of Braganza in marriage : but the Grand Duke was immoveable, and the unsuccessful mission of Velasco put the whole Spanish court in an uproar ! The astounding fact of any Grand Duke of Tuscany having a will in opposition to the Spanish monarch was almost too curious for belief and far too criminal to pardon ! Wars and other circumstances which rendered Italian tranquillity of great importance made Philip conceal his anger, while Ferdinand far from desiring an open rupture renewed his offers of service. Don Pietro at his request was sent home and received says Galluzzi "with love and affection by his brother, *honoured by the people and acceptable to all!*"†

Catharine meanwhile pushed forward the negotiations for Christina's marriage and even offered to sell the marquise of Saluzzo to Ferdinand, a dominion of great importance for which both the Duke of Savoy and the Huguenots were intriguing ; but when the bargain was nearly concluded that Duke occupied it with the connivance of both Pope and Spaniard, on the pretext of securing the place for Henry of Navarre. This act considered

* Galluzzi, Lib. v., cap. i.

† This of course must be a mere flourish of the historian in his admira-

tion for the Medici, or a severe satire on the Florentines. Piero disgusted even the corrupt court of Madrid.

as a direct violation of the treaty of Chateau Cambresis startled all Italy as the first shock of an approaching war: the Venetians blamed Sixtus V. as the disturber of Italian peace and urged Ferdinand to unite with them in aiding France to recover Saluzzo which he was willing enough to do, but through fear of Spain was still compelled to dissemble. He however urged Henry III. and Catharine to the attempt but the distracted condition of France paralysed every effort and that monarch remained at Blois a king without a kingdom. Saluzzo was lost, Paris had revolted, the Huguenots were pressing hard, and Philip, in despite of the famed Armada's destruction by the English, was ready to pounce upon his ruined provinces. In this dismal moment for Henry, Orazio Rucellai arrived with offers of Ferdinand's friendship, and instructions to conclude the marriage contract, while as a proof of his sincerity he resigned the cardinalate by proxy in public consistory. This unequivocal conduct, his alliance with Venice, and growing influence in Italy increased the anger of Spain which could not yet comprehend its master's will being thwarted by a petty Italian prince whose states were deemed a mere province of the Spanish monarchy and he himself as scarcely equal to one of its grandees. Genoa fearful of Charles Emanuel closed up with Tuscany, and Sixtus looked to the Grand Duke's friendship as the safeguard of his family; especially after the marriage of Flavia Peretti with Verginio Orsini, which confirmed the Medician ascendancy in Rome. All these things as reported by the bitter pen of Olivarez were not likely to remain long unnoticed by Philip who immediately reënforced the Maremma garrisons and followed it up by a succession of petty annoyances maintained with long and unmitigated pertinacity. The Duke of Guise's death in December 1588 and that of Catharine of Medicis in January 1589 for a while retarded the accomplishment of Ferdinand's marriage: Catharine
A.D. 1589.
whom Galluzzi endows with "*rare and singular virtues*" was

perhaps more of an intriguer, than a bigot; but a profound dissembler, and with some good qualities had almost all the vices of her race: she bequeathed to Christina her claims on the duchy of Urbino which according to the investiture of her father Lorenzo de' Medici she had a right to do; but that investiture was spoliation*. Cæsar Borgia son of Pope Alexander VI. expelled Guidobaldo the last of the house of Montefeltro from Urbino: he was restored by Pope Julius II., and to show his gratitude adopted that pontiff's nephew Francesco Maria della Rovere: the latter while at Venice in command of the papal army stabbed Cardinal Riario legate of Bologna, which murder, although partially overlooked by his uncle's affection, was never formally pardoned and therefore eagerly clutched at by Leo X. as an excuse for spoliation and deposition in order to settle the dukedom on Lorenzo de' Medici and his descendants. At Leo's death in 1521 Adrian VI. recalled Francesco Maria and reinvested him in the principality but without prejudice to the rights of others. The troubles that followed prevented Clement VII. from reinstating Catharine then a child but always considered as Duchess of Urbino, and so designated, in the marriage contract with Henry II. of France. To these rights Christina succeeded by Catharine's will which was ratified by Henry III. who concluded the marriage contract and became answerable for the dower as if that princess were a daughter of France. It is a curious and illustrative fact that Henry was unable to secure the bride's safe journey from Blois to Marseilles without the escort of an army, and he was actually assembling one for that purpose when the gallantry of the Huguenot chiefs made them guarantee her safety, many of them escorting her in person to the place of embarkation. She was received there with great splendour and general acclamation although the people had thrown off their allegiance and established a republic; but placed between the Huguenots and Savoy, hating

* Galluzzi, Lib. v., cap. 10.

both, exposed to either, at strife amongst themselves, and generally disposed to seek protection from a foreign prince, they would have willingly received Ferdinand as their lord, and he would as willingly have accepted them had Henry III. given him any encouragement. But neither Don Pietro who commanded the Tuscan squadron, nor Christina herself could give an answer to such propositions and therefore proceeded to Florence where they arrived on the thirtieth of April 1589.

The Princess of Lorraine was sixteen years of age, tall, majestic, full of grace vivacity and spirit, endowed with all that womanish quickness which is scarcely talent, and with more than ordinary beauty. From the villa of Poggio-a-Caiano she proceeded to Florence: the town was full of strangers ambassadors and princes from half Europe: the rejoicings lasted a month and as usual were conducted with equal taste splendour and costliness: the pictorial genius and imagination of Tuscany were continually invoked to vary the amusements, and Florence resembled the city of a fairy tale rather than the sober habitation of common men*.

The storming of a Turkish fortress was represented in the court of the Pitti palace with inimitable talent; a magnificent tournament followed, and a sumptuous banquet was prepared within the ducal halls; but after the guests were refreshed and expected a renewal of this passage of arms, instead of listed field the court had been changed into a mimic sea, and a spirited naval combat made the walls re-echo to its thunders! Thus taste was refined, the fine arts flourished, and manners were superficially polished by the expensive pleasures of the age; but treasuries were emptied, and severe taxation paid for all! Yet the glitter of a royal pageant is but a poor exchange for the cries of a suffering people!

A French princess on the throne of Tuscany was a novel sight, and great political changes were prognosticated: Philip's

* Galluzzi, Lib. v., cap. iº.

indignation rose ; he sowed fresh seeds of discord between the brothers, both being already well disposed, and seduced Pietro entirely from Ferdinand to Madrid, where he was nevertheless employed in advancing the Grand Duke's claims for repayment of all the Tuscan loans both personal and mercantile, as well as to excuse his refusal of a new one which had just been demanded. The Tuscan sovereign's marriage, although into a family allied and even related to Philip, confirmed all his suspicions of that prince's real intentions, and being bent on the conquest of France he could brook no opposition from a vassal : but the Grand Duke was no less firm in his resolution to maintain the integrity of that realm, and if this failed to watch at least that the Duke of Savoy did not strengthen himself so as to shake the balance and endanger the independence of Italy. He therefore thwarted the latter by assisting the Provençal people ; endeavoured to convince Sixtus that he would contribute more to the support of religion by healing the wounds of France than by excommunicating Henry of Valois for assassinating Guise, and frankly informed Philip of the offers made to him by the republic of Marseilles requesting his counsel about the acceptance of them. A long silence and short answer, purporting that everybody should be content with what they possessed, came with peculiar grace from the man who had just conquered Portugal and was preparing to dismember France ! It at least showed Ferdinand that he was not in that monarch's confidence and that Charles Emanuel was ; wherefore every aid was continued to Marseilles and Provence until the assassination of King Henry III. obliged him to pause and reconsider his proceedings.

The crown of France devolved by right on Henry of Navarre, but the league, in consequence of his religion, assumed the power of electing a king and the Duke of Lorraine seemed likely to be thus chosen : wherefore a union with his party or

at least the making use of his ancient family claims to Provence for Ferdinand's especial designs on Marseilles could scarcely be thought unsatisfactory to Spain, or not at least easily be opposed by her without displeasing the League. Philip however determined by continual worry and alarms to find him work enough at home, and the murder of Alessandro d' Appiano natural son of James VI. Prince of Piombino afforded a good occasion. By a series of menaces and annoyances Spain endeavoured to drive Ferdinand to some open act of hostility, but feeling secured from any direct attack by the efficient state of his garrisons he confined himself to complaints and remonstrances.

Extreme scarcity and immense sums expended in the importation of grain from England in English bottoms, which were repeatedly taken by Spanish cruisers, brought Ferdinand into closer connection with Queen Elizabeth, and by compelling him to provide large magazines of grain fixed his attention on Leghorn, always a favourite object with the Medici from the days of Clement VII. Duke Alexander had enlarged the original fortress, Cosimo I. added more works and secured the port, but its want of depth and capacity confined trade to vessels of the smallest burden, wherefore he planned a great work, no less than the construction of an artificial haven of vast dimensions fit for vessels of any size ; but death prevented its execution. Francesco I. wanting Cosimo's sagacity, instead of carrying out this intention imagined that by building a city people would flock to it although unwholesomely placed, and without any real advantages in consequence of bad harbourage. The port was indispensable to population, which naturally followed commerce ; but these princes only contemplated the making of Leghorn a free emporium for merchandise, Pisa being still considered the real centre of trade as if it were yet an independent community, a circumstance which seems to have been overlooked in their calculation. With this idea however Cosimo encouraged the settlement of foreign merchants there and

opened a water communication with Leghorn by means of a navigable cut, wherefore the city prospered during his lifetime, perhaps unnaturally, but declined as rapidly in the reign of Francesco. Ferdinand who venerated Cosimo's talents, seized all his notions with a surer grasp and determined to enlarge the port of Leghorn: this however was not done until he had failed in reëstablishing the commerce of Pisa by a transfer of the mercantile and banking business of Besançon to that city, the insecurity of travelling being then a great impediment to French commerce. For this purpose in 1588 he restored the two annual fairs which in her free and prosperous times were held at Pisa, and by affording every sort of accommodation to merchants he began his plan with some prospect of success. In January 1590 the works at A.D. 1590. Leghorn were commenced but proved unable to sustain the shock of heavy seas, a force that few people inexperienced in maritime affairs have any conception of, so that Cosimo II. was afterwards obliged to construct the present mole and be contented with a smaller port. The new fort in time became useless, and was demolished in 1629 to make room for private dwellings of the rising town which was soon filled with commercial people from all parts of Europe. The recently converted Portuguese Christians so persecuted by Philip II. gladly took refuge in a free city: the Jews, unjustly condemned and worried by all nations, were glad of an asylum there: the Corsicans, suffering under Genoese oppression, left their homes and settled there: outlaws who were wandering through Italy, cowering under political persecution and forced to become robbers, sought shelter in Leghorn: other hapless beings compelled to abandon home and country from shame or suffering, all flocked seaward under the protecting wings of Tuscany: French discord and civil war drove the Marseilles trade in the same direction; many a weary citizen of that ever-vexed and tyrannical republic, permanently established

themselves within the nascent city, and the once pestilent swamps of Leghorn now teemed with unwonted life and industry.

Ferdinand strenuously exerted himself to exclude the Duke of Savoy from Provence as the most effectual way of assisting Navarre whose pretensions he favoured not only as legitimate king but from personal admiration: Henry's character and abilities he thought afforded the best hopes of restoring France to tranquillity, of curbing Spanish ambition and checking those papal intrigues; which under the mask of religion only looked to extend the patronage and strengthen the power of Rome. Venice, protestant Germany, Holland, and England, had all similar objects; all wished to see the power of France concentrated; the first promptly acknowledged Henry IV. but Ferdinand was still too much trammelled by Spain to declare himself; yet secretly offered pecuniary aid, and through Girolamo Gondi, an old follower of Catharine's and principal farmer of the French revenue, he was enabled to supply it. He had already succeeded in persuading Sixtus V. that the Catholic faith would be better preserved by a catholic king in a united and peaceful country than amidst the clash of arms and anarchy, and the fear of losing Avignon finally convinced him of the necessity of opposing Savoy. This enraged Olivarez, who threatened that if the King of Navarre were absolved and his catholic followers left unexcommunicated Philip would declare war on the pope, assemble a general council, and renounce even his spiritual obedience! Sixtus, nothing daunted, answered threat by threat, menaced Philip himself with excommunication, deprivation of his crown and a renewal of the ancient crusades against his kingdom. Well aware of Ferdinand's part in this, Olivarez and the Spanish cabinet stung him at every point, that minister being entrusted with the task, which was to be pushed to the very verge of war, or the fear of driving the Tuscan monarch into a declared alliance with France and the Venetian republic.

Alfonso Piccolomini, now returned from that country, having been coldly received at Florence, was soon caught up by Olivarez and appeared with a band of five hundred followers in the mountain of Pistoia but was quickly driven by the rural militia into the Papal States with a price of 10,000 crowns upon his head or double if taken alive. Ferdinand dreaded his great influence at Siena, aided as he would secretly be by the Spanish garrisons and a numerous band at Castro ready to join him; he was therefore outlawed in Romagna, Ferrara, Mantua and the Venetian states, and ultimately driven skulking from numerous blood-hunters into the territory of Placentia. After various adventures he joined Marco Sciarra and with a combined force of a thousand men was defeated in the Campagna of Rome; again by the Tuscan troops; and finally, by the efforts of Ferdinand and the Duke of Ferrara, he was taken and hanged at Florence in 1591*.

Notwithstanding the capture of his English corn ships to the value of 1,000,000 of gold, Ferdinand supplied bread not only to his own subjects, but the pope's, and even to those of Philip who had captured them; all of which gained him great and deserved praise in Italy besides a home reputation, which increased on the birth of his eldest son when he had the good taste and feeling to spend in beneficence those sums that on such occasions had been usually wasted in festivities; and by this example he restrained the open display of luxurious living before the eyes of a people in want of the common necessities of life. After a reign of much good and much evil the ferocious Sixtus died on the twenty-seventh of August 1590. He had imposed no less than thirty-five new taxes, "those nettles," says Muratori, "that are never deracinated," and left a name behind him which even in that author's day served the mothers and nurses of Rome as a bugbear to frighten their children into good behaviour. Urban VII. Gregory XIV. Innocent IX. and

* Galluzzi, Lib. v., cap. ii. and iii.—Muratori, *Annali*, Anno 1590, &c.

Clement VIII. succeeded each other in less than eighteen months: the last was Ippolito, son of Salvestro Aldobrandini who retired from Florence after the fall of the republic: he was close, serious, and severe; and resolved if possible to quiet France without ceding a jot to the Huguenots or their king in religion, or to the French bishops on the jurisdiction of the Holy See*.

Four years of famine had in 1591 reduced all Italy to a state of misery more or less lamentable and in some places beyond all belief distressing: sixty thousand people, A.D. 1591. a thing scarcely credible, are said to have been starved to death in Rome alone during that melancholy period! Tuscany by Ferdinand's exertions suffered least but still was terribly distressed, and in other states it would seem as if Beccaria's dogma had been purposely reversed, and the least good of the greatest number taken as a rule of government: the eyes of princes in those days were too highly elevated to regard the people in any light but as objects for taxation, war, and punishment. It was during this general distress that to check the progress of Savoy in Provence Ferdinand persuaded one *Bausset* to deliver the island of Iff, near Marseilles, into his hands; this he immediately strengthened declaring that it was held in the Grand Duchess Christina's name, whose family had claims on Provence, but only in trust for the legitimate and Catholic monarch of France whenever he should appear. The republic of Marseilles acquiesced in this, but the Duke of Savoy in extreme indignation flew to Spain for the purpose of conferring with Philip, whose suspected wish of placing him on the French throne had already disturbed the League. The battle of Ivry on the fourteenth of March 1590,

* "*Lettere scritte alla piana ed in cifra dal Cardinale Pietro Aldobrandino al Cardinale di Piacenza Legato in Francia sotto Clemente VIII. dalli 17 Settembre, 1592, fino, alli 4° Luglio, 1594.*"— A curious

MS. in the author's possession, beautifully written, (probably in the character of that day) richly bound, with the Aldobrandini arms stamped on it in gold.

coupled with other warlike events gave a general result favourable to Henry IV. who probably would have taken some steps, even at that early period, to rejoin the Church had he not been provoked by the violence of Gregory XIV. and the more efficient aid both in men and money with which that pontiff seconded the League in 1591 *. The spiritual and temporal interests of Rome, like the Siamese twins, though apparently separate were so cunningly united, that a very difficult operation alone could divide them even in the mind of her most conscientious disciples, but their identity was complete in the infallibility of papal conception. It is therefore averred under correction, that Clement VIII. was sincerely desirous of composing the troubles of France: his secret instructions to the legate Philip Sega commonly called the Cardinal of Piacenza, were to throw every impediment in the way of negotiation between the two parties at the general assembly at Paris in 1593 on the subject of Henry's conversion, unless convinced of its sincerity: the pontiff himself was far from convinced, on the contrary he considered it a mere scheme to get the crown and then to annihilate the Catholic religion in France. The legate was also ordered not to vex the Catholic followers of Navarre, but endeavour to seduce the Cardinal of Bourbon from his side without creating a third party; and above all to crush the rising opinion that the French clergy could absolve a heretic without permission from Rome. Any king, this envoy was instructed, might be chosen in preference to Henry provided he were a good Catholic; and the Duke of Maine received notice that he was welcome to the crown if he could get it, but that he must not impede others who had more chance from being proposed and seconded by Spain and the French nation. Philip in fact desired to marry his daughter the Infanta Clara to the Archduke Ernest of Austria or a prince of the house of Guise, and place her on

* Muratori, *Annali*, Anni 1590-91-92.

the throne of France; but Clement objected to this on account of the Salique law which if not written was in the mouth he said, of every French infant. Feria the Spanish ambassador also mentioned the Duke of Guise, which appeared the most appropriate choice, and Maine intrigued for himself alone. The Cardinal of Placentia was also secretly instructed to dissolve the assembly, although convoked at Clement's own suggestion, if anything occurred likely to be dangerous to their party; for from first to last this pontiff seems to have placed little faith in Henry's religious sincerity, and hence all his subsequent obstinacy and alarm for the fate of religion in France*.

The subtle, weak, and insidious politics of Spain kept all that were not her friends or slaves in a feverish anxiety, because neither force nor treachery were neglected if the occasion suited and time served, and the conduct of royal cabinets was then justified in as eloquent and plausible audacity as in our own day. To watch this and the general current of foreign policy Ferdinand, with Belisario Vinta's aid and that of the secret council, almost entirely applied himself: Pietro Usimbardi Bishop of Arezzo who was well skilled in every wile of Roman policy; his brother who had formerly governed Siena as Captain of Justice; and the Archbishop of Pisa, all belonged to this council. The second Usimbardi was minister of justice and the reputed suggester of Ferdinand's best plans to ameliorate the people's condition and improve the country. Four years of famine had drained Tuscany of more than 2,000,000 of gold to pay for corn in England and Dantzic, without very materially alleviating the distress in many parts of the state, and this accordingly showed itself in turbulence emigration disease and death. Ferdinand endeavoured by employment to mitigate suffering, and partially succeeded by his attempts at desiccation in the Val-di-Chiana and Maremma besides his general encouragement of agriculture, in which both prince and private

* Lettere dal Cardinale Aldobrandini al Cardinale Legato di Piacenza, MS.

gentlemen expended considerable sums. Several districts, such as Fucecchio, parts of the Val-di-Chiana, and some spots in the vicinity of Pistoia were restored to health population and industry : much was left undone but much was accomplished for humanity ; and for such doings the Medici deserve well of their country. The Pisan aqueduct was completed about this period ; great and successful though secret encouragement was given to make the Dutch and English settle at Leghorn, and that city rose in the world's notice as one of the most convenient and profitable markets in Europe.

The Grand Duke's great difficulty was to disengage himself from Spain and openly assist Henry to the throne of France : Clement VIII. although devoted to the League was both fearful and suspicious of Philip, who had been trying to embroil him with every independent prince in Italy. The latter first demanded that all Henry's adherents should be excommunicated, which was for the moment refused on the plea of its inutility ; church censure the pope argued would fall pointless and only debilitate when not prudently given, like medicine, with the prospect of good effects. The next demand was that none of the house of Bourbon should be acknowledged as King of France, and this was refused because of the difficulty of forming processes against each individual, besides its general injustice. The third was that the Duke of Maine should be warned not to aspire so high as the French throne : which was refused because he was a good Catholic and as forwarding Henry's views. A request was next made that the papal ministers should be instructed to act entirely with Spain. To this Clement answered that in every case where Spanish views were directed to public good there would be no lack of concert. Finally the pontiff was invited to declare himself on the claims of the Infanta to the French throne, and this he instantly did by repeating that her rights were a chimera, for Salique law was written on the heart of Frenchmen, and their very infants had it

in their mouths. The ambitious views of Spain were thus discovered as the mask of sanctity fell, for if Maine and all the Bourbons had been once excluded and the League unsettled, it would not have been improbable that with Philip's power and influence the crown might eventually fall on the Infanta, especially as Clement promised that should any chance arise for her without danger to the religion and kingdom of France, his legate had instructions to act energetically with the Spanish ministers*. By all this it appears that Clement saw clearly enough through Philip's designs and was himself anxious for a speedy pacification on account of religion and revenue, yet temporized with him because his aid was necessary: but in this we have a little anticipated our narrative.

Philip now resolved to bring Ferdinand to a declaration of his opinions by demanding possession of Iff, which would test his positive and public denial of partiality for Henry of Navarre: but the Grand Duke had no sort of scruple in repeating his denial, or of retaining Iff in deposit, as he said, by a compact with the governor for the legitimate King of France. The dismissal of the Florentine ambassador and open hostility were Philip's first impulse, but the fear of an Italian war, which would have been playing Henry's game, checked this, and a continuance of harassing and expensive alarms, empty threats, and menaced invasions, was with safer policy adopted. The *Presidj* were therefore reënforced, Grosseto threatened, fresh levies made in Naples and Milan, the Admiral Doria was ordered to attack Iff and capture the Tuscan galleys, and strong symptoms were exhibited of making a permanent conquest of Provence as a step to the complete subjugation of Italy. These were all hollow, but Ferdinand made use of them to alarm the pope and Venice, and they soon vanished before the successes of the Dutch in Flanders and the consequent retreat of the Prince of

* Lettere in Cifre dal Card°. P. Aldobrandini al Card°. di Piacenza, May 14, 1593, MS.

Parma from the French territory. Don Pietro was also instigated to join in this hostility to Ferdinand who had given him some cause for dissatisfaction, and he did so effectually by claiming a moiety of the hereditary Medician property; this was instantly snatched up as a state affair by the Spanish cabinet, who sent him to Milan as general of the Italian infantry with orders to make reprisals on Tuscany and entitle himself Duke of Siena. These proceedings were soon made known by the Grand Duke's spies and forced him to a closer alliance with France, for which the arrival of Cardinal Gondi Bishop of Paris on a mission from Henry to Clement VIII. gave him fair occasion. The Spanish movements and determination of the League to elect a king made all sides pause, and Henry took advantage of this to throw out hopes of his conversion by sending Cardinal Gondi to explore the pope's mind, and Girolamo Gondi as a secret agent to Ferdinand. The legate at Paris had instructions from Clement VIII. "*to counteract by every means in his power any attempt at peace or truce between the League and Henry of Navarre as dangerous to the Catholic religion and the realm of France;*" and the king himself complains in his instructions to Gondi that all his own efforts had failed to accomplish it; wherefore he sends that Cardinal to vindicate his conduct and put his friends in possession of the truth*. Clement on hearing of Cardinal Gondi's having demanded passports from Savoy intimated that if he came as a good cardinal to perform his duties at Rome he should be welcome, and there would be no occasion for any passports; but as the envoy of Henry of Navarre and his heretics all the passports in Christendom would be useless. According to Galluzzi this pontiff secretly detested the Spaniards, and was even ashamed of being chaplain to their king though obliged to him for the pontificate: he was therefore supposed to be desirous of a fair opportunity to

* "Lettere in Cifre," &c., Lettera, Gondi, cited by Galluzzi, Lib. v., 25 Luglio, 1592.—Letter to Cardinal cap. iv.

shake off his dependance with decorum, but Ferdinand undertook to ascertain his real sentiments for Henry through the Cardinal of Toledo who equally detested them, and was moreover a confidant of the pope, a jesuit, and a pensioner of the Grand Duke. Yet according to Muratori he acted from pure religious motives. With Gondi the pope kept no terms, and even while a guest at the Medici Palace he was warned not to pass within the ecclesiastical border: this forced him towards Venice whence he maintained a secret correspondence with Ferdinand, and the latter with Henry by means of Girolamo the farmer-general, through whom funds were secretly supplied to that monarch. Ferdinand had repeatedly urged on Henry the absolute necessity of changing his religion as a means of success, and now pressed it more than ever, accompanied by a threat of accommodating matters with Spain if before a certain time some sure sign of his intentions were not published, because any delay would confirm the pontiff's indecision until every prospect of reconciliation had vanished. Henry assured him in an autograph letter from Mantes in April 1593 that he would read his
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recantation two months after the Duke of Lorraine had made peace with him on just conditions but for this he had need of both men and money; wherefore he gladly accepted four thousand Swiss offered him by Ferdinand together with the pay of a thousand more, and requested a further loan of 200,000 crowns, by which means he expected shortly to reduce Paris and some other places, besides being enabled to get rid of several about the court who impeded his good intentions. The Grand Duke pleased with this avowal determined to smooth the way for him at Rome, and by means of the Cardinal of Toledo's dissimulation and Spanish antipathies to withdraw the uncertain pontiff from Philip's hands, for the majority of cardinals was composed of his own adherents. This prelate seems to have succeeded in eliciting Clement's secret feelings about a reconciliation, and these were said to be strong in favour of

receiving Henry ; but neither the immediate result nor the legate's secret instructions justify this belief, for most of the letters to the latter expressly except the King of Navarre as successor to the throne, in the belief that his conversion could not possibly be sincere and therefore that he would ultimately betray the Church ; and the pope moreover as late as June was hastening the succour of a thousand men under Ridolfo Baglione to the League at Paris *.

Toledo's report was forwarded by Ferdinand with more urgent solicitations to Henry about changing his creed, and also the announcement of twenty thousand men being assembled at Milan which, unless some decided step were taken by him, would compel the Grand Duke for his personal safety to reconcile himself with Philip and leave the king to his own resources. This remonstrance accompanied with some pecuniary aid had probably its effect, although Henry was much more inclined to conquer first and recant afterwards lest it should appear that temporal considerations alone were his motives of action. But the critical moment was come ; the general assembly under the League's protection was about to name a king, and the excited candidates were anxiously awaiting the result, when the Spanish ambassador audaciously proposed the Infanta Isabella, and filled the whole assembly with indignation. Meanwhile Henry had convoked the Catholic prelates to discuss their faith, had received their instructions, informed the pope of all his proceedings through the Grand Duke of Tuscany and Cardinal d' Ossat, and finally renounced his heretical opinions in the cathedral of Saint Denis on the twenty-fifth of July 1593. He immediately wrote to inform Ferdinand of the event, acknowledging him as one of the principal means of his conversion ; yet as the latter used no theological arguments in the matter putting it entirely on the score of policy, we may fairly

* Muratori, Annali, Anni 1592-3, brandini al Legato a Parigi, MS., &c.^a.—Lettere &c.^a, dal Card.^e Aldo- *passim*.

suppose that Clement VIII. was not far wrong in his estimate of Henry's sincerity. The solemn mockery in Saint Denis was unworthy of him: justifiable in conforming to the outward rites of the prevalent religion for the sake of a nation's peace; unjustifiable in uttering what all the world believed to be a solemn falsehood, by declaring before God that he heartily repented the past errors of his religious belief; that he abjured and detested them; when every soul was convinced he had changed from expediency alone principally under the influence of his friend and minister Sully.

The progress of Turkey on the imperial frontier had during these transactions become alarming and drew the attention of all Europe; succour was demanded from Italy with but little effect through fear of Spanish ambition: the Emperor Rodolph II. was weak and indolent, but guided principally by his prime minister, and influenced perhaps by the Grand Duke's more secret counsel, he had gradually emancipated himself from Spanish tutelage, openly advocated the cause of Henry at Rome, even allowed that monarch's armies to be recruited by German Protestants, and in return for pecuniary succours, promised Ferdinand the imperial fief of Piombino if it fell as was expected to the empire. The latter after an unsuccessful attempt to unite the Italian princes against the

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Turks sent two thousand four hundred men on his own account under Giovanni de' Medici, accompanied by Don Antonio and four hundred Tuscan gentlemen as volunteers to fight the infidels. Virginio Orsini soon after joined them with an equal number, so that from the house of Medici alone three thousand two hundred men were sent free of expense to the Turkish war. The League against Henry IV. now began to crumble, although Clement still held back in despite of all the persuasions of the Cardinal of Toledo and Ferdinand, who at last hinted that the French, irritated and impatient at his perverseness, were likely

to throw off all spiritual obedience and elect a patriarch of their own *.

The pope's nephews had been bribed by Philip, but not equally, and Cardinal Aldobrandini believing himself undervalued was chosen to work on his uncle in favour of Henry from whom Ferdinand and Toledo led him to expect more favourable treatment: these intrigues were successful, and as a preliminary step Cardinal Gondi received permission to finish his journey and repair to Rome.† The pride and arrogance of popes had mounted high, and even the cardinals especially when related to the pontiff, were no less haughty; like the ancient proconsuls they deemed themselves the equals and protectors of princes and assumed a lofty state and almost military demeanour inconsistent with the legitimate character of the priesthood. Amongst these the Cardinal of Saint George another nephew of Clement VIII. formed a debating society in his palace at Rome, where all the public affairs of the European states were discussed and criticised: this at least was its ostensible occupation, but the proceedings were not confined to mere words and opinions, for from this club, supported by Spanish influence and intrigue, issued as is said the successive mandates to murder Henry IV.; first by Barriere, of which the king had notice from a Florentine monk called Serafino Bianchi who in common with all his countrymen was singularly attached to him; but he so deeply incurred the displeasure of the Roman Inquisition for this ungrateful service that all Ferdinand's influence became necessary to save him ‡. The next attempt at the instigation of Spanish ministers and Jesuits was by Pierre Chatel who wounded Henry in the mouth, and its consequence was a general expulsion of that order from France amidst universal indignation at their conduct. Ferdinand complained

* Discorso di Cosimo Baroncelli, MS. — Galluzzi, Lib. v., cap. v., p. 147. — Lettres d'Ossat à Mons^r. de Villeroi, vol. i., p. 20, Ed. 1627.

† Ibid., p. 26, Lettere au Roy.

‡ Galluzzi, Lib. v., cap. v. — Lettres d'Ossat, vol. i., p. 359, Lettre lxxxiii. à Villeroi.

strongly of the Spanish ambassador who immediately after the news of this event had become public, went to the Jesuits' convent and remained there several hours despatching couriers, and openly declaring that although Henry had escaped this time he would not again be so fortunate for there were too many already prepared to make similar attempts. The frank fearless and generous nature of Henry IV. laid him peculiarly open to such perils and Ferdinand had already warned him of his danger, especially against one Zanetto a Savoyard and favourite companion in his pastimes who had been active in the cause of the League. All France felt so indignant at these attempts that it became a national question whether the validity of Henry's conversion should not be at once acknowledged without further regard to the pope: the star of Bourbon was in the ascendant, Paris had received him with acclamations; the Duke of Guise and other chiefs of the League had submitted; the royal army was augmented; the war with Spain hitherto merely defensive now began to roll the other way, and Henry's character became better known and more generally appreciated*. Mayenne and the Spaniards were still in arms; war was formally declared against the latter in January 1595; and this state of French affairs, the progress of the Turkish A.D. 1595. army, the fears and demands of the emperor; and lastly the unrelaxing efforts of Ferdinand, finally overcame Clement's obstinacy wherefore an ambassador was sent to reconcile Philip with France and acknowledge Henry's title. The latter after some doubt despatched a second ambassador to Rome under Ferdinand's auspices, and by their joint energy coupled with Toledo's efforts, every Spanish intrigue was baffled and Henry formally reconciled with the Church of Rome to the great satisfaction of all sensible and well-disposed people.

The internal government of Tuscany was during these transactions directed almost exclusively and with great regularity by

* Lettres d'Ossat au Roy, vol. ii., p. 28.

Usimbardi, though the frontier was continually disturbed by Spanish intrigues; squabbles and affrays repeatedly occurred, but Cosimo's militia system was so well maintained that nothing serious could easily happen, and Leghorn prospered principally through the Dutch and English traders and settlers there; for at that port alone in the catholic world were they received without abhorrence: thence probably the great intercourse between England and Italy, and that universal study of Italian literature which marked the age of Elizabeth and James, and nourished the vigorous spirit of their day. Long-continued scarcity established an almost permanent and very lucrative trade in corn with England Holland Lubec and Dantzic, for self-interest dissolves prejudice making nations regard each other through a clearer medium by which both bad and good qualities are seen in their natural colouring. Leaving internal government much in the hands of ministers, Ferdinand's energies were almost exclusively directed to the consolidation of Henry's power as a counterpoise to Spain, now more provoked by his reconciliation with the Church, and especially with the Grand Duke's part in effecting it: Philip soon began to believe in a confederacy between Venice Rome and Tuscany, and prepared for the consequences. Cardinal Albert of Austria resided permanently at Genoa whence he maintained a constant communication with the Dukes of Sessa and Savoy, and also with Prince Doria who commanded the Spanish fleet: all this coupled with Fuentes' success against Henry in Flanders convinced every mind that the tide of war was either about to roll into Italy, or stop and overflow Provence, one great object of Philip's ambition. Dissensions existed amongst the French generals; Casau the tyrant Consul of Marseilles was trying to confirm his power by means of Spain, and had even introduced a Spanish garrison into the new fortress built by him at the suggestion of Ferdinand as an additional defence against Savoy: the governor of Iff was an obstacle to this, and therefore soon

became an enemy, so that open hostility was the consequence. Henry's reconciliation with Rome was studiously concealed from the citizens and any words in his praise were punished with death : a peace with Savoy by the cession of Saluzzo, and Marseilles in possession of Spain would have cut off France by sea and land from Italy, wherefore Ferdinand despatched Gondi and 300,000 crowns to Henry with instructions to call his attention to Provence and persuade him not to relinquish Saluzzo to the Duke of Savoy. Anxious at the same moment to deceive Spain of whose designs he was perfectly informed, he poured out a stream of political falsities to the Cardinal Albert, repeating as he had constantly done that no prince in Italy was more devoted to Philip's glory and interest than he ; and that notwithstanding his wishes, as a devout Catholic, for the King of Navarre's conversion, still he could only detest a nation that had uniformly opposed his father by attacking both throne and life : that his actions and sentiments had moreover been misrepresented by the Duke of Savoy and Philip's ministers, but that he required no other advocate than Cardinal Albert himself ! These, with many other falsehoods, were poured forth so abundantly that even the cunning incredulity of Spain was startled and somewhat shaken. The efforts of Casau to take Iff made Ferdinand send a messenger of peace in the name of the Grand Duchess, but her letter was insulted and he narrowly escaped, wherefore other ways were considered. Negotiations required time, war uncertain even were the king in a condition to besiege Marseilles ; so the hereditary resource of a Medici on every emergency was speedily adopted, and the death of Casau, the only thing required to smooth all difficulties, at once decided. The Cavaliere Pesciolini backed by abundance of gold and murderers, was charged with the execution of this deed ; he was credited to the young Duke of Guise who commanded Henry's forces in the vicinity of Marseilles where Philip had already sent three thousand men and twelve galleys

under Carlo Doria who occupied part of the works and guarded the harbour. Assassination, as was then argued, although generally indefensible yet used in such a cause against such a tyrant became, not only excusable and expedient, but just and lawful: it was certainly merciful at that moment, and perhaps if closely examined might form one of the justifiable exceptions which attend all general rules: but the principle of assassination is too horrible and dangerous ever to admit beforehand of exceptions, though the deed, from peculiar circumstances might haply be excused and even applauded afterwards. A Corsican called Pietro di Libertà a man trusted by Casau but discontented, was tempted by 100,000 crowns to murder his friend and commander. It was further settled that early in the morning of the sixteenth February 1596,

A.D. 1596. Guise was to approach the city gate of which Pietro and his brothers had charge, while a false tumult was to be made within, and when Casau ran to the spot as was expected he was to be despatched. The plan succeeded, and the Consul found himself suddenly inclosed between the inner and outer gate a prisoner in the hands of traitors. Pietro abruptly addressing him exclaimed "*Comrade, these proceedings can no longer be borne; we must cry Long live the King and down with the Spaniards.*" This speech and plunging his sword into the Consul's breast were nearly simultaneous and Pietro's brothers completed the murder, but Casau only exclaimed "*Ah comrade I never expected this from you!*" Signal guns were then fired, and Guise in a few moments occupied the gate with thirteen hundred men; the whole population shouted for Henry, and the Spaniards were expelled ere they had sufficient time to take possession. The treachery in this instance was for Henry IV., and would have gained Marseilles without the murder, which was perhaps more in revenge for the recent insult to the Grand Duchess whose letter had been torn and trampled on by the hapless Consul.

The Spaniards reëmbarked in a panic their galleys receiving some shot from the fort of Iff as they passed, which occasioned more trouble with Spain and displeased Ferdinand, who promptly excused it to both Doria and Philip, yet knew the latter too well to expect anything but dissimulation in return. Fearing an attack on Iff, which would force him to an open declaration either for France or Spain, he consulted Villeroi who endeavoured to convince him that the cause of Italy must be fought in the camp of Henry wherefore all succours should be directed there as the fate of every Italian prince was tied to his chariot-wheels. Ferdinand was a priest and diplomatist, not a general; he could not comprehend in its full extent the force of Henry's military genius, supported as it was by such a statesman and financier as Sully, therefore made many useless remonstrances about the application of what funds he had supplied, as well as other reproofs of Henry's conduct both as king and general. But however just might have been Villeroi's arguments, Ferdinand had now become too fearful of Spain to continue his succours from Tuscany, and Don Pietro's presence at Rome increased his apprehensions. This monster had become too infamous for Spanish depravity, unscrupulous as it was, to make use of with impunity: he had been driven from Madrid by outraged public feeling and the indignation even of a Philip II. for having established a school of the most unnatural and disgusting licentiousness! His very pages were arrested while standing behind his carriage, and given up to justice with his companions, and he himself would have hardly escaped had not the King still required his services against Ferdinand. A state of continual agitation arising from these vexations exhausted the Grand Duke's patience and increased his desire for peace, wherefore Alessandro de' Medici Archbishop of Florence was employed on this mission, and with some expectation of succeeding in consequence of the Sultan's progress; for when monarchs become tired of war nations are

allowed to repose ; yet like wild beasts they permit themselves to be again roused at the keeper's voice and once more begin to display the savage grandeur of their nature !

Ferdinand's efforts had been very instrumental in enthroning

A.D. 1597. Henry IV. so firmly as not to be easily shaken by

Spanish hostility ; but unable to estimate all that monarch's difficulties, and apparently incapable of seizing the true point of view in which the combined interests of France and Italy were to be regarded, he felt mortified at the Bourbon's not allowing himself to be entirely directed by his pen after all pecuniary aid had been discontinued, and seemed utterly blind to the fact, that in existing circumstances the fate of France and Henry must have carried with it that of all Italy from Calabria to the Alps. It was under this disagreeable feeling that he resolved to attempt a reconciliation with Spain which if unsuccessful would at least alarm France ; and in common with the other cardinals (for he was still a priest at heart) complained that Henry neglected them for military men, because he took but little pains to form a French party at Rome. The bold straightforward soldier and the politic and priestly Medici were not really congenial spirits, only united by circumstances ; wherefore Ferdinand resolved to make any concessions to Philip short of surrendering Iff, or a loan of money, but was rebuffed at all points with a demeanour so haughty that only the cession of that fortress seemed likely to unbend it. By the terms of occupation Ferdinand had bound himself to relinquish Iff to the legitimate king of France, but the Marseilles people considered a Florentine garrison at their harbour's mouth both degrading and suspicious, wherefore secret measures were taken to dislodge them. The Grand Duke however was not disposed to relinquish a post of such importance, his only security for all the loans he had made to Henry : it was a check on Provence, it bridled the port of Marseilles, and served as a harbour of refuge for the Tuscan trade to France

and Spain : a handful of men could defend it against multitudes, and it commanded two small but safe harbours in the adjacent isles of Ratonneau and Pomegues, capable of holding forty and eighteen galleys respectively. Every vessel bound to Marseilles passed under its guns ; those of great burden being even obliged to discharge part of their cargo there before they could enter that port ; and it also commanded the fishery*. All these reasons made Ferdinand hold this conquest equally firm against treachery and open force, with both of which he had to contend, and Iff was therefore successfully maintained by Giovanni de' Medici his natural brother. This disturbed the good understanding with France while it softened Philip's asperity, and thus excited hopes of a marriage between the Princess Maria de' Medici and the Prince of Spain ; but the Grand Duke's resolution in retaining Iff as a pledge for his loans made Henry feel hurt and even insulted, so that nothing but policy prevented an open rupture. The death of Alphonso last duke of Ferrara made Ferdinand regret this quarrel : that prince had asked the pontiff's permission to dispose of his duchy as he pleased : this had been refused and was not unreasonably taken by the pope as a proof that Alphonso doubted Don Cæsar's legitimacy, then a disputed point ; nevertheless, the latter quietly succeeded, both by Alphonso's will and alleged hereditary right. Clement's ambition and vanity were aroused, he declared Don Cæsar illegitimate and notwithstanding every remonstrance claimed Ferrara as an ecclesiastical fief. More than six thousand men were soon assembled by Clement, and not only Romans of every rank and position but Italians and strangers seemed eager to assist in expelling an unoffending prince whose only failing was a slight doubt in the world's opinion of his father's legitimacy ! If we may believe Galluzzi even Henry of France joined in this league on purpose to annoy Ferdinand : according to the Cardinal

* *Lettres d'Ossat*, vol. ii., p. 496, Let. cxxvii., au Roy.

d' Ossat he certainly offered his aid to Clement whose right was generally acknowledged at Rome ; neither did he seem unwilling to derive some profit from the transaction, and would no doubt have sent assistance if Don Cæsar, thus baited and excommunicated, had not yielded to circumstances *. This transaction reflects no credit on Henry, more especially as the house of Este had ever been warm partisans of the crown of France : even Ferdinand had neither the spirit nor generosity to take a decided position in favour of his kinsman, but in a true jesuitical strain declared that loving Don Cæsar and desiring the exaltation of the church he would preserve a strict neutrality : Venice, Spain, and the Italian princes although all against church aggrandizement, and Ferdinand along with them, looked silently on through fear of war in Italy †. Don Cæsar vainly prepared to resist, for the excommunication alone had paralysed him ! War was pompously declared from the Vatican on the 22nd of December 1597 ; the pope and cardinals cast their lighted torches on the ground ; the cannon of Saint Angelo roared, and the shouts of the Roman people answered them ! Ferdinand allowed this sentence to be published in Tuscany ; Don Cæsar retired to his duchy of Reggio and Modena ; the papal army, led by Cardinal Pietro Aldobrandini, entered Ferrara in triumph ; and Clement subsequently took possession of his new state with a slight remission of taxes and an ostentatious supply of victuals ‡. The population of that city, amounting to ten thousand Christians and five thousand Jews, did not regret this change, for over-taxation had weaned them from Alphonso and they hoped for better times under the church ; yet the grass now growing in the streets of that once populous capital is a melancholy comment on ecclesiastical government ! Clement VIII. was so elated

* Lettres d'Ossat, vol. i., p. 454, Letters to the King and Villeroi.

† Lettres d'Ossat, vol. i., p. 457, au

Roi et Villeroi.

‡ Muratori, Annali. — Lettres d'Ossat, Letter cxv., p. 463.

by this success that his two abettors the Spanish ambassador and Doria, now worked on his vanity so as to make him aspire even to the conquest of Tuscany. The first wanted money the last a scarlet hat for his son, and the resources of Spain were unscrupulously used for both: the grand duchy was divided by them into three shares, of which the church was to have one, the Aldobrandini another, and Spain the third: all this was arranged at Rome, while the pope's military triumph served as an excuse for still maintaining his army. He however had not the courage to declare his intentions, and Philip II. now old and suffering was more disposed to leave his weak and indolent successor a tranquil heritage than the task of disentangling the web of a difficult war.

Ferdinand being aware of this conspiracy made vigorous preparations for defence: his ambassador remonstrated, and the pope with his hand on his heart solemnly avowed that on no account would he molest Tuscany, being too much attached to the Grand Duke for benefits received in a private station to undertake anything prejudicial against him, but on the contrary would rather defend him with all the ecclesiastical power; and while thus lying, his envoys were actually busy at Madrid urging Philip not to lose so fair an occasion of conquering Tuscany*! Ossat Bishop of Rennes, who at this moment was on a mission from Henry to the Grand Duke, asserts not only his disbelief in Clement's intentions of making war on Tuscany, but also his opinion that no real credit to them was given by Ferdinand himself, who conscious that the retention of Iff had weakened his claims only took that opportunity to prove Henry's sincerity in time of need and have an excuse for demanding instant repayment of his loans, besides getting himself included as a French ally in the approaching peace with Spain†. But whatever might have been Ferdinand's real views or belief

* Galluzzi, Lib. v., cap. vii, p. 201.

† Lettres d'Ossat, Letters cxxiii. and cxxxi, cxxxv., vol. i., pp. 487-504-512.

he certainly demanded and was promised succours from Henry, who moreover assured Clement that he would defend Tuscany against the world, but hoped not to be forced into hostilities with the Holy See, yet if necessary he would in person march to Ferdinand's assistance. The approaching death of Philip together with this reconciliation made both monarchs regard Tuscany with a more friendly eye and engage to include her as a common ally in the treaty of Vervins, while the success of Ossat's mission for the restoration of Iff completely satisfied Henry*.

The peace of Vervins, concluded in May 1598 terminated forty years of calamity in France, and left all Europe languid and exhausted: Spain saw her king on the edge of the grave, her treasury drained, her commerce almost ruined, her provinces lost or depopulated, her industry expiring, her people crushed by taxation, and a young monarch without energy talent or character waiting to take the reins of government. France required all Henry's vigour, all Sully's prudence, to restore even comparative prosperity; and the sovereign's want of children was an additional calamity, as it nourished ambition in the great feudal nobility. Henry's powerful hand repressed them, but he could not live for ever and a storm of forty years was not easily tranquillized. England and Holland were prosperous; Elizabeth had kept the former powerful, but her approaching death alarmed that nation: the commerce of both these countries was rapidly augmenting and establishing itself on a firm basis; increasing wealth was awakening a new spirit of enterprise accompanied by all that vigour which commonly precedes excessive luxury and refinement. In Italy both Milan and Naples suffered from Spanish oppression and Spanish want, in the most intense degree: Venice was constantly flurried by Turkish aggressions; Genoa, devoted to France, was coerced and fleeced by Spain; Clement was half ruined by the

* *Lettres d'Ossat*, vol. i., pp. 492-506.

conquest of Ferrara and his own nephew's rapacity, and every Italian prince was indignant with Henry IV. for ceding to the wily Duke of Savoy his only entrance into Italy, the marquisate of Saluzzo. Tuscany alone seems at this time to have been exempt from the general suffering, for excepting the Levant trade she absorbed almost all the Italian commerce: at Leghorn were collected as on neutral ground, the ships of various conflicting nations in commercial freedom and general harmony, with common rights and privileges for every country and every religion. Here English, Spanish, Dutch, French, Portuguese, and Jews were peacefully congregated in mercantile industry, enriching and benefiting each other and smoothing all religious and national asperities: the Jews in particular, driven from Spain and Portugal by the darkest bigotry repaid Tuscan liberality by wealth and commercial enterprise; the persecuted from every country fled to this asylum, which like the Hebrew cities of refuge gave a home, and peace, and shelter, to the world's unfortunate; yet the galleys of San Stefano, still actively employed against Turkey, shut out the Levant trade from Tuscany for the benefit of France and Venice, and widened the breach with that country.

Philip II. after a long reign, of war oppression and cruelty, quitted the world with great fortitude; long, intense, and almost unheard-of sufferings from the loathsome termination of acute disease had tried his patience and resolution beyond most men, and the last scene of his existence was most manfully sustained*. Philip III. a gentle but weak and incapable monarch succeeded him on the thirteenth of September 1598, and at once abandoned himself to the guidance of Sandoval Marquis of Denia whom he soon created Duke of Lerma, and invested him with all his authority, to the great indignation of the Spanish nobility†.

* Watson Hist., Philip II., vol. ii.

† Watson, Philip III., vol. i.

Sillery replaced the Duke of Luxemburg as ambassador at Rome with instructions to procure a dissolution of Henry the Fourth's marriage, but Queen Margaret's death unexpectedly removed this difficulty and made way for an alliance long contemplated by Ferdinand between his niece Mary and that monarch: it was in fact an old promise by which Henry expected to acquire a million and a half of dowry and a fruitful wife. Maria de' Medici now about twenty-five years old was a woman of considerable beauty and weakness of character: educated in rigid seclusion and utterly unacquainted with the world, all her duties had hitherto been concentrated in a profound respect for the Grand Duke and Duchess, and her whole ambition was a splendid establishment. Philip II. had prevented her marrying Rannucio the tyrant Duke of Parma, and the Emperor Rodolph II. had long contemplated either the marrying her himself or giving her to whichever archduke might be elected King of the Romans; so that for six long years she had been continually tantalized by hopes until her beauty began to fade under the influence of melancholy and frequent disappointment. This alliance was prospectively arranged seven years before, and Ferdinand now offered Henry his niece with half a million of dower; but the king expected three times that sum and the marriage was already considered at Paris as a thing concluded. Ferdinand refused so exorbitant a demand, but negotiations continued, and so eager were the Florentines for this match that Jacopo Corsi, in the name of his fellow-citizens offered to supply the difference from their private means. After much of that sort of chicanery and intrigue, without which according to some opinions no courtly or diplomatic business can prosper, this affair was terminated by the sincerity of Villeroi and Sully, and a marriage portion of 600,000 crowns accepted. "Your counsellors of state," said Sully, "advise your majesty as financiers; I who am a financier advise you as a counsellor of state: it neither becomes your

“dignity to seek a wife for her dower, nor is it befitting in the
“Grand Duke of Tuscany to buy your alliance at so costly a
“rate. Your object is children: one son will be your security
“and that of your kingdom, as well as the happiness of your
“subjects, and worth more than all the gold in Italy.” “I am
“content” replied Henry; “marry me; do what you will;
“only let it be done quickly”*.

While the treaty was yet in progress Ferdinand’s enemies in Spain and Italy became jealous of this new honour to the house of Medici and suspicious of a league between Venice, France, and Tuscany to prevent Saluzzo going to the Duke of Savoy, a thing still unsettled. The Count of Fuentes, one of the ablest of Philip’s ministers, was made governor of Milan with orders to watch all Italy, and the Duke of Sessa who succeeded Olivarez, continued to annoy Ferdinand: for this purpose he played on the weakness of the pontiff, a man already lost in the pride of his own triumphs and the marriage of his niece to the Duke of Parma, jealous also of Medician honours, and angry at the exposure of his designs on Tuscany, all of which disposed him to quarrel with Ferdinand; wherefore a slight dispute about the Chiana marshes was soon fanned to a flame by Sessa in the hopes of bringing it to open war.

The Princess Mary’s marriage was proclaimed at Florence in April and the Duc de Bellegarde as proxy for Henry IV. arrived in autumn when the ceremony took place with ten days of magnificent entertainments: she then sailed from Leghorn with a squadron of eighteen galleys and an immense suite; at Lyon Henry met her just after the siege of Montmelian and completed the marriage. This for various reasons displeased every state but Venice, from the emperor downwards, and Spain above all: the Duke of Lerma however, avoiding any direct hostilities, contented himself with continuing the old system of annoyance and urging Clement to the invasion of Tuscany:

* Galluzzi, Lib vº., cap. viii.

Clement's fears prevented this, but Ferdinand was well informed of all these machinations and so distrustful of him that he agreed to an injurious settlement of the dispute about the Chiana river and marshes only to quiet his fears for that frontier. He then advised Henry not to allow the marquisate of Saluzzo to be filched from him by the wiles of Savoy, offered money to continue the war with that prince, and if peace came entreated that he would insist on the disarming of the pope and Spaniard and force them to a rigid observation of the treaty of Vervins. The possession of Saluzzo by France was considered indispensable to Italian liberty, and Henry's success in Savoy it was hoped would secure it; wherefore Italy was astounded to see the marquisate given to that state at the peace of 1601 in exchange for some trifling possessions on the French territory*. To the Grand Duke's ambassador, Villeroi only replied that

A.D. 1601. amongst great princes the useful took the place of the honourable, and this so disgusted Ferdinand that he at once determined to make the best terms possible with Spain and dismiss the French alliance from his mind. His first step was the arrest of a man who passed for the defunct King Sebastian of Portugal, but although he did this at the Spanish ambassador's request and thus affronted the King of France who protected the impostor, he got only a cold acknowledgment of his service in return, as Henry had foretold. The

A.D. 1602. Spanish troops in Italy still continuing formidable, Ferdinand humbled himself further by meekly demanding the reinvestiture of Siena which had been withheld at Philip II.'s death, and refused ever after except on the condition of paying Don Pietro's debts. Peace and friendship were nevertheless still warmly professed, but neither the protestations of Spanish ministers nor the more solemn declarations of Clement could satisfy Ferdinand: his alarm compelled him again to seek Henry's aid, and an endeavour to

* *Lettres d'Ossat*, vol. ii.—Galluzzi, *Lib.* v., cap. ix.

excuse Don Sebastian's arrest was the first step. Henry who knew the character of Fuentes and saw more clearly into the designs of Rome and Spain, assured him that there would be no need of his assistance but that he was ready and willing to lend it. Ferdinand became importunate, but still he only received similar assurances, and after much threatening and insolence Fuentes drew off his army to the Spanish and Turkish wars while the papal forces reënforced Archduke Ferdinand. But notwithstanding all this, so bent was the Medici on a reconciliation with Spain that he even refused the honour of being godfather to the young Dauphin of France lest it should displease the Spanish monarch. This did not soften Fuentes who now domineered without control over Italy, therefore assembling fresh troops, he again threw out menaces and endeavoured to excite Siena to revolt; nor did he lose the occasion of a quarrel between Don Cæsar d' Este and Lucca about the possession of Garfagnana, to try every means of involving Ferdinand therein, merely to accuse him of being the disturber of Italian tranquillity.

In the province of Lunigiana Fuentes had already caused an insurrection with unusual vexation and some terror to Ferdinand as it brought war to the verge of his dominions; Fuentes had moreover joined Biron and the Duke of Savoy in their conspiracy against Henry and intended attack on Provence and Languedoc for the purpose of kindling another war in France. The plot was discovered and according to Galluzzi chiefly through Ferdinand's intelligence, which being inconsiderately spoken of by Henry with expressions of personal gratitude, drew down more intense hatred from the Spanish cabinet on the head of the Grand Duke*: The young Prince of Piombino the last of the Appiano race died at Genoa in January 1603 and that
 A.D. 1603.
 principality fell to the empire: Rodolph had long before promised it to Ferdinand but his demands were so

* Galluzzi, Lib. v., cap. x.—Lettres d'Ossat, vol. ii., pp. 1138 to 1148.

exorbitant and the Grand Duke's terror of Spanish resentment so great that he renounced the pursuit and resolved to bend still lower to the Spaniard. This resolution was strengthened by the erection of a fortress at Porto Lungone in Elba which with the "*Presidij*" and a series of strongholds in Lunigiana bound him in a chain of iron, so that he even attempted a reconciliation with Don Pietro to whom Philip III. had given a pension: every overture was repulsed, but only because the queen was covertly manœuvring to marry one of her sisters to the Prince of Tuscany. This secret was obtained by Ferdinand's ambassador Cosimo Concini from the king's confessor as the real price of a reconciliation. Ferdinand although not averse would make no advances, and the death of

A.D. 1604. Pietro in April 1604 removed one apparent obstacle to returning favour. Pietro wrote a penitent death-bed epistle to his brother recommending some of his natural children, who were generously treated, and Ferdinand's affairs soon assumed a new aspect. The investiture of Siena was immediately promised, the treaty of marriage commenced, and every apprehension of Spanish enmity suddenly dissipated: gifts of considerable value were mutually presented and a statue of the Spanish king similar to that of Cosimo I. at Florence was ordered from the celebrated John of Bologna.

This close alliance with the two great rival powers coupled with Savoy's enmity kept Ferdinand on the watch for accidents: the treaties of Vervins and Lyon with Spain and Savoy had skinned the surface of discontent, but the wound was not healed and the restless spirit of Charles Emanuel was ever at work for the disturbance of his neighbours. Bold, subtle, active, and reckless of consequences, he is said to have always been as ready for the blackest treachery as for the boldest war, and when both of these failed he could glide like a snake through all the perplexities of diplomatic cunning and official obscurity. Spain could not brook the rise of Henry IV. from a mere chief-

tain of excommunicated heretics to be her competitor for political ascendancy in Europe, where he was endeavouring to reëstablish a just balance at her expense. All parties being more or less exhausted avoided open war while each insidiously endeavoured to undermine his antagonist: Henry secretly aided the Dutch who with English help were still braving Spain, while Philip fomented plots and other annoyances to embroil France: Elizabeth was dead, and Ferdinand's fears of displeasing the pope had hitherto prevented him from holding an open correspondence with James, but a continual interchange of good offices and secret communications were maintained by means of merchants and the ministers of both nations at the court of France, while the commercial facilities given at Leghorn produced similar favours in England. James the First's connexion with Lorraine formed an excuse for sending an ambassador to congratulate him on his accession to the British throne, and a treaty was commenced by Christina and the Duke of Lorraine for marrying Henry Prince of Wales to a Medici. Henry IV. was in favour of the match, and Ferdinand was desirous of allying himself with a nation then beginning to establish that maritime ascendancy which has ever since been its pride and safeguard. The tender age of the princess and the domestic troubles of Mary prevented its accomplishment for the moment. The insolence of Henry's mistress the Marchioness of Verneuil roused the queen's indignation, who was governed by Concini and Eleonora Dori, two Florentines of bad character belonging to her suite: she acted imprudently intemperately and weakly, so as to draw letters of severe reproof from the Grand Duke both on herself and Concini whom he threatened to proclaim a rebel: but notwithstanding this the coolness between Ferdinand and Henry was increasing: Sully had in fact become his enemy, and the delays and irregular payment of debt were a continual source of quarrel; by Sully attributed to the king's parsimony, and by the king to

Sully's negligence. Meanwhile Fuentes and the Spanish cabinet were not idle: they successfully usurped A.D. 1605. Porto Longone, Piombino, Monaco, Finale, Coreggio, and a great part of Lunigiana; this alarmed all Italy without arousing the emperor from his indifference. His cabinet was sold to Spain but a Diet at length took up the business, and even Henry IV. although averse to Italian affairs now began to think interference necessary, more especially as Fuentes was fortifying the Valteline against both French and Swiss, and cutting off their communication with Venice by similar doings at Sonzino. This general outcry made Fuentes relinquish his hold of Lunigiana, but not of Lungone although considered by Clement as blockading Civita Vecchia, by Ferdinand as a bridle on Porto Ferraio and Leghorn, and by Genoa as dangerous to Corsica. The Spaniards kept it to command Elba, to protect Orbitello and Piombino, and defend all their coast possessions against the Dutch and English, whose squadrons now began to show themselves in those seas. It was built at Prince Doria's suggestion exactly after the model of Antwerp citadel and considered as the stronghold of the Spanish-Italian possessions*.

Clement VIII. died on the tenth of February and by a union of the Tuscan and Spanish parties in conclave the Cardinal Alessandro de' Medici Archbishop of Florence was elected under the name of Leo XI. but dying on the twenty-seventh of April, scarcely four weeks afterwards, was succeeded by Cardinal Borghese of Siena as Paul V. The new pope was young and therefore unwelcome to the older men: he was also considered meek and humble, but a subsequent quarrel with Venice soon displayed his audacity confidence and hypocrisy. A.D. 1606. The circumstances were as follow. An infamous priest of Vicenza called Scipione Saraceno first attempted to

* This fort is now going to ruin: Napoleon last resided there: since then it has been deserted and looks like a town desolated by the plague. The works are beautiful and command a magnificent harbour, but all falling rapidly into decay.

seduce and then vindictively traduced a noble lady of that city : this abominable proceeding roused the public anger which was increased by his having about the same time broken the seals of important public documents. For these crimes Saraceno was imprisoned and ordered by the Council of Ten to prepare for trial ; but Paul V. determining to vindicate ecclesiastical privilege and exemption from secular power, ordered that he should be instantly delivered up to the Bishop of Vicenza. The Senate refused, and Papal indignation rose still higher, especially on their renewal of an old decree which forbade all ecclesiastics from acquiring real property by will or otherwise, and prohibited the erection of sacred edifices on Venetian ground without that government's express permission. In addition to these offences Brandolino Abbot of Narvese who had committed sundry murders, poisonings, and still more disgusting crimes, even amongst his own relations, was tried and executed by the civil power alone. Paul rendered furious at this accumulation of audacity and elated by success in two similar cases at Genoa and Lucca, imperiously commanded that the culprit should be delivered up to his nuncio in December 1605 under pain of a general excommunication, from the Doge himself to the lowest senator, and in April 1606 he executed this threat, with the addition of an interdict on the whole state if within twenty-four days every decree against ecclesiastical liberties and immunities were not revoked, and the prisoner in the hands of his nuncio ! The Venetians, already prepared for this, had given orders that the monitory should not be published in their dominion : the Jesuits, the Teatines, and the Capuchin Friars withdrew ; but otherwise, public opinion both spiritual and temporal was with the government. Fear, inclination, and interest of course had their usual influence ; pens were busy on both sides, and the Cardinals Baronio and Bellarmino with the celebrated Fra Paulo Sarpi particularly distinguished themselves. It was however not the pen but the sword to which Pope Paul trusted for the removal

of this difficulty, and both sides made ready for war : France, Spain, and Tuscany interfered as mediators ; the cause of Venice was their own, yet none were prepared or willing for hostilities. Paul complained of being forsaken by the princes but was finally brought to reason by his fears of France and England, and his mistrust of Spain, so that the affair terminated peaceably in the following year.

The undecided conduct of James I. kept Europe in suspense ; the glory of Elizabeth oppressed him, her helmet and corselet were too ponderous for a mere pedant to sustain and the national spirit was for a while repressed, until gathering new force it burst on his son's head and destroyed the monarchy : His alliance was sought by Holland, France, and Spain ; but peace with the last was universally unpopular because it gave time for the reëstablishment of her commerce and exhausted treasury. The Medician Princess was still too young for the marriage treaty to make any progress, but the intercourse between England and Tuscany augmented ; the merchants who traded to Leghorn had peculiar privileges, their counsel was desired and their skill employed in managing the Tuscan marine and private trade of Ferdinand ; he in fact shared in the profits of their privateering war against the Spaniards and employed them in the forced trade with America as well as in the Red Sea and Levant. Leghorn had therefore become a place of great commercial importance to England ; it was filled with the permanent establishments of her subjects, and the two countries were on the most cordial terms ; yet, says Galluzzi, a book was published in London in 1605 by Edward Blount giving an abusive account of Tuscany ; Robert Dailington the author, he supposes must have been misled by some discontented Tuscan as the book is full of lies and invectives against that nation and its sovereign. Without entering into that historian's feelings it is but fair to quote the character then attributed by a foreigner to the Tuscan people ; and by the

native of a country in those close habits of intimacy which are formed by reciprocal interests: thus viewing it we can scarcely admit the description to be pure scandal though probably an exaggerated picture, charged too with some self-evident falsehoods.

“ From the position of the country, and the badness of the air,” says Dallington, “ which being under the mountains is subject to the extremes of heat and cold ; from the sterile soil which cannot produce more than a quarter of a year’s consumption without succours from abroad ; from the nature of the people, ambitious, niggardly, ignorant, vain-glorious, dissimulators, envious, enemies of strangers, voluptuaries, boasters, cowards, low-minded, jealous, eager of gain, and *totally devoid of genius* *! Their prince corpulent in person; not beneficent; avaricious; a usurper of fraternal inheritance; his people’s oppressor; a monopolizer and retailer of food; violent, unjust, usurious, hated by the nation; weak in force; strong in riches; which he spends in corrupting the courts of Rome and Spain, and finally causes his people to exist in misery” †. With probably some truth in this character which partly agrees with certain Florentine writers of an earlier date, there are mingled many lies and assertions that contradict themselves, and its publication although vexing to Ferdinand did not alter his behaviour to the British nation, whose subjects along with those of France seem to have infused an energetic spirit into his marine, accompanied by a thirst of glory superior to that of destroying infidels and pirates, and gave rise to expeditions of far more importance. Amongst these was one against the city of Bona in the name and under the auspices of Prince Cosimo then seventeen years old, which being completely successful was hailed by the nation as a good omen of his future life. His marriage with the Archduchess Maddalena of Austria, the Queen of Spain’s sister, was still pending, and Ferdinand’s intimacy

A.D. 1607.

* Galileo was about this period a Professor in the Pisan University!

† Galluzzi, Lib. v., cap. xi.

with Philip III. became every day more close while that with Henry IV. proportionably waned and this coolness increased on Don Giovanni de' Medici's retirement from that monarch's service by whom he was much favoured. Ferdinand about A.D. 1608. the same time acquired the fief of Pitigliano a possession of the Orsini family before noticed, which though partly dependent had always been a thorn in the side of Tuscany; and thus was extinguished what Cosimo I. used to call the "*match of Italian wars.*" Prince Cosimo's marriage was this year solemnized by proxy at Gratz, and a new gateway was opened in the wall of Florence for the Austrian bride, who on entering received the crown of Tuscany from Ferdinand himself, and the city blazed with its customary taste and magnificence! The news of a signal victory gained about this time by the Tuscan galleys with an immense capture of treasure arrived opportunely to fill the cup of Ferdinand's satisfaction; but it was his last.

A small Tuscan squadron had intercepted the great periodical convoy from Alexandria to Constantinople and after a severe action captured or dispersed the whole: two galleons and seven other vessels with a booty of more than 2,000,000 of ducats fell into the victor's hands as Ferdinand himself acknowledged to Henry IV., but according to public fame much more, on account of the numerous prisoners of rank whose ransoms increased the general value. For forty years this convoy had never been molested by Christians, but the Chevalier de Beauregard a Frenchman of the Florentine family of Guadagni at A. D. 1609. last brought all this prize in triumph to Leghorn and laid it at the feet of his sovereign. The envy of both France and Spain was excited by such unlooked-for success, as both were in want of money: Ferdinand's triumph was at its height, but extremes touch: his joy, his reign, and his life came all to nothing, and he died on the seventh of February 1609 just as he was about to resign the government to Cosimo.

We may believe the historian of the grand duchy when he asserts that Ferdinand was the first of Medician princes whose death caused any sorrow ; but whether from his virtues and beneficence, or bitter recollections of what had been and fears of what might come, is more difficult to determine. As a Medici and a cardinal it must be confessed that his chance of natural or acquired virtues was extremely slender and he therefore deserves great praise for breaking through the habits of his race and entering the pale of humanity. Ferdinand's government was marked by all the subtlety of his family and country, but he was more just and politic and less cruel than his predecessors, and like Cosimo looked on public prosperity as the surest means to self-aggrandizement. Personally frugal after he became Grand Duke, he was yet magnificent in public and expended large sums on the general improvement of Tuscany. He found no occasion for, nor did he use much severity in his rule, because the old democratic spirit was extinct or quiet under the golden yoke of monarchy : independence had turned to adulation, boldness to fawning, and all the turbulence of liberty to licentious softness and mental slavery. As a cardinal, Ferdinand was dissolute without being singular ; but as a sovereign he reformed, and his marriage restored order and comparative morality to the court. As a cardinal too he was fierce, haughty, bold, and independent : at the head of a powerful faction he feared no pope, brooked no control, even from the Vatican ; withstood the ferocious Sixtus whom he himself had created, and haughtily vindicated his own independence.

Sixtus had forbidden short arms to be worn on pain of death, yet one day from Prince Farnese's pocket tumbled a small pistol at the very feet of the pontiff : he was ordered to be hung the same night at the first hour. Ferdinand, then on good terms with Cardinal Farnese, determined to save his kinsman and found means to retard every clock in Rome, one full hour, all except the pontiff's : at the moment appointed for

execution he repaired to the Vatican and demanded mercy for his friend : Sixtus seeing that the time was passed and, as he thought, the execution over, most graciously accorded it ; whereupon Ferdinand repaired to the castle of Saint Angelo and carried off the prince in triumph. The pope was exasperated at this trick and also annoyed by Ferdinand's haughtiness insolence, and notorious lasciviousness ; therefore resolved in despite of every obligation to arrest the cardinal himself. He was accordingly summoned to the Vatican, but cognizant of the pope's intention armed himself with a cuirass and short weapons, made his Florentine adherents occupy every door passage and approach to the papal palace, and then boldly entered the audience-chamber ! Sixtus was informed of all, and cautiously dissembling received him as usual : Ferdinand bowed profoundly, and purposely letting fall his robe a cuirass glittered from beneath ! On seeing this the pontiff exclaimed. "*My lord cardinal, my lord cardinal, what may this raiment be ?*" "*This,*" said Ferdinand slowly raising the purple garment ; "*This, O most holy father, is the habit of a cardinal ; and this,*" throwing open the drapery and striking his mailed breast, "*This is the habit of an Italian prince !*" "*Cardinal, cardinal,*" returned Sixtus, "*we are able to strike the scarlet hat from thy head !*" "*And if your holiness remove the hat of felt, why then I must replace it by one of tempered steel*" exclaimed the audacious Medici and straightway left the apartment ! Then traversing Rome with all his followers he remained three days there as if to defy the pontiff ere he retired coolly and leisurely into Tuscany !

This bold spirit did not remain with him on the throne : an ecclesiastic himself with an archbishop for his counsellor, and endeavouring to conciliate Rome, papal encroachments were allowed a clear course, and clerical insolence, especially of the Jesuits, kept pace with its rapacity. Usimbardi compelled the latter to contribute at least partially to public expense, but Ferdinand was weak ; he tolerated these the most able rapaci-

ous and successful of church robbers; they gave him infinite vexation, yet he interceded with Henry IV. for their return to France, and but for such protection the people would have soon driven them from Tuscany.

Ferdinand left four sons and four daughters: Cosimo II., Francis, Charles, and Lorenzo; Eleonora, Caterina, Maddalena and Claudia: his intention was to establish the younger princes in independent estates away from Tuscany in order to prevent such quarrels as had occurred between him and his brothers: with this view he undertook an unsuccessful expedition to Cyprus, and even wanted to establish a principality in the Brazils as well as on the coast of Africa near Sierra Leone, but Spanish enmity prevented all. He said that the air of Florence engendered subtle brains and that "brothers rarely agreed together" wherefore he desired to keep them separate. Pozzo Archbishop of Pisa, Vinta, and Usimbardi served him confidentially during all his reign. To Usimbardi were attributed all national ameliorations; to Pozzo the whole policy in favour of France, and to Vinta the perfect system of intelligence that was established by Ferdinand. A wise selection of ministers is at least due to him, but his double dealing between France and Spain lost him the confidence of one without gaining the other, until humbled into acts of almost cringing obsequiousness. The treaty of Lyon, concluded with Savoy, by shutting out France from Italy perhaps excused a timid politician, whose talent lay in secrecy and intrigue, for endeavouring to propitiate a power which hung like an avalanche over his country; but he probably disgusted both Henry and Sully by his duplicity. The loss of such friends tells harshly on his character; yet it is a singular fact and honourable to Ferdinand, that his three principal ministers should have worked well and amicably together for the long period of one-and-twenty years; a proof of the absence or powerlessness of intrigue, the fidelity of the ministers, and the sovereign's constancy. During this reign Giovanbatista Concini succeeded

Torello as Auditor Fiscal but having been involved in the intrigues of Francesco's court could never gain the confidence of Ferdinand, although he was Vinta's brother-in-law and son of Cosimo's favourite minister: the little favour he ever enjoyed was lost by an attempt to justify the infamous conduct of his son at the French court. He died in 1606 and his successor Paulo Vinta expired shortly after the Grand Duke, leaving Pietro Cavallo da Pontremoli in charge of the fiscal department of whom there will be hereafter occasion to speak. Succeeding a man like Francis it needed but little exertion for Ferdinand to be deemed a better prince than he really was; but besides a certain love of popularity, he possessed much sociability and urbanity of disposition, and was totally free from Spanish pride and stiffness, and all that melancholy reserve so conspicuous and unpopular in Francis. He loved to let the prince expand into the companion, and as such displayed all the agreeable talents of his family: absorbed in the higher affairs of state and foreign politics, he avoided that vexatious meddling with private affairs so customary in the two preceding reigns, and while maintaining almost all public departments as Cosimo left them, they were allowed to work alone, and people in general became more satisfied with the administration of justice. All these things caused Ferdinand I. to be regretted and the accession of a youth of eighteen to the throne of Tuscany did not diminish the feeling.

COTEMPORARY MONARCHS.—England: Elizabeth until 1603; then James I.—Scotland: James VI. until 1603; then King of Great Britain.—France: Henry III. until 1589; then Henry IV.—Spain: Philip II. until 1598; then Philip III.—Portugal: Sebastian until 1578.—Naples and Sicily: Philip the Second and Third of Spain.—Popes: Sixtus V. until August 1590; then Urban VII., Gregory XIV. until October 1591; then Innocent IX. until 29th December, 1591; then Clement VIII., January, 1592, until February, 1604; then Leo XI., from 1st to the 27th April, 1604; then Paul V. in May, 1604.—German Emperor: Rodolph II.—Sultan: Mahomet III. until 1593; then Achmet.

CHAPTER VIII.

FROM A.D. 1609 TO A.D. 1621.



COSIMO THE SECOND,

GRAND DUKE OF TUSCANY.

A PROFOUND veneration for all his father's acts and opinions as well as their own sagacity and general efficiency, prevented Ferdinand from making any great changes in the state machinery: his three principal ministers were A.D. 1609. treated as private friends and shared his affections after his own family: Pozzo and Usimbardi who conducted his private trade participated also in its profits, and Vinta with the conduct of foreign affairs was otherwise and generously rewarded. In the year 1600 Ferdinand created a new council named the "*Consulta*" for the especial purpose of examining petitions, and the proposition of consequent measures of administration and justice: this, which seems also to have been a sort of appeal court from fiscal decisions, weakened the auditor's power and rendered his judgments less arbitrary and more equitable. The secret or privy council was more occupied with foreign affairs and great commercial measures than with private business, which principally fell to the "*Pratica Segreta*" and other inferior courts, and thus removed the crown a step further from its subjects' individual affairs. The citizens also being now generally admitted to state honours and offices, had nearly lost all that factious animosity against the sovereign and his party which existed when republican turbulence was first broken up and

compelled to a feverish disunited and uneasy obedience. The choice of magistracies having been at first principally confined to the capital created a degree of jealousy in the provinces which Cosimo I. and Francesco had both endeavoured to reduce by the establishment of perfect equality throughout the state, and the continued pressure of despotism as it were amalgamated the variety of public feeling and softened republican asperity. There was also a superficial improvement of society, and yet the first step was then made towards that descent down which the nation has ever since been gliding: refinement and gentleness have increased, the people are more polished, more amiable, and probably more virtuous; but the free impressive stamp of the old republican was then with some exceptions completely obliterated, or only to be met with struggling, as it now is, through a milder but still uncongenial atmosphere. With Ferdinand the laws were better obeyed, and more by inclination than fear, and the interest of prince and people was more identified than under his predecessors.

The Grand Duchess Christina's example too reformed courtly manners, introduced more decency and morality, at least on the surface, preserved an appearance of virtue, and was therefore no allurement to vice: virtue was revered in name if not in essence; fewer crimes were committed by the citizens; a greater respect was paid to, and a more reasonable intercourse maintained with women; and although excessive jealousy on points of honour had now also become more rational and disciplined, there may be a question whether this too was not an early symptom of the decay of that personal spirit and bold energetic character so conspicuous in their republican forefathers. The sovereign jurisdiction was much obstructed by an insolent and presumptuous priesthood which claimed immunity from all taxes laws and restraints but those imposed by the Church; which was absorbing all real property in the state, and proportionably abstracting from the power and revenues of government, while

Ferdinand showed a disgraceful weakness in yielding to their encroachments.

The Church territory and Lombardy still swarmed with bandits and necessarily infected the Tuscan borders, notwithstanding all Ferdinand's efforts to stave off this evil at least from the interior, but ecclesiastical immunities and encroachments shackled him : a bull of Gregory XIV. in 1591 by introducing new pretensions boldly infringed on the sovereign power and protected vagabonds, and Ferdinand was weak enough to suffer it ; for he was no longer the Italian prince who bearded Sixtus ; the steel cap and cuirass were forgotten, and bending submissively to Rome he allowed the Bishop of Montepulciano to deny absolution to every public officer who should presume even to demand the Gabelle from ecclesiastics ! Armed with the bull of "*Cæna Domini*" these harpies refused, both at Pisa and in the Val-di-Chiana, to share the expenses of draining though they reaped the benefit ; at Siena an appeal was made to the Roman courts against the Tuscan sovereign for presuming to demand tolls from the priesthood, and unanimous resistance was everywhere opposed to his authority. The nuncio who secretly encouraged this made a merit of pacifying it, and sold this favour at a high price to Ferdinand. The Jesuits and other recent orders were the most rapacious ; they swindled families out of their inheritance, destroyed their peace and happiness, and impoverished all they touched : in Florence the people were outrageous, a general ferment pervaded the nation, and even the Grand Duke, as he himself asserts, completely shared it. His complaints are strongly expressed in a letter to the Archbishop of Florence wherein he avers that the transfer and commerce of real property was destroyed by its being for the most part swallowed up in religious institutions, and thus the many were injured by the few. Public indignation demanded a present remedy, public feeling was strong, and its voice stern : the case was accordingly brought before the

senate the judges and other magistrates ; the statutes of Siena Venice Milan and Genoa were examined, but more especially those of republican Florence which expressly prohibited the willing of property to the "*Non Conferenti*"* or those who did not contribute to the public burdens. The result showed that commerce was impeded by the ecclesiastics, who had incorporated no less than three-fourths of the real property of Tuscany, and an instantaneous remedy became necessary. But an unexpected opposition sprung up from the learned profession; the lawyers to everybody's surprise deprecated an absolute decision without reference to the pope, as contrary to canon-law and ecclesiastical liberty and independence ; and moreover threatened the Senate with pontifical censures if they persisted. The Grand Duke became alarmed, the Senate was divided, and all the solid reasoning of the senator Niccolo di Giunta was of no avail. He argued that the possession of real property was the surest guarantee for obedience and good citizenship ; its transfer to an insulated community claiming total independence of the state, was ruin to the sovereign authority, poverty to the people, and destruction to the constitution ; and he accused the lawyers of recklessly promulgating such opinions because Florence was not their native country and they were indifferent to the consequences. Ferdinand cowered under the frowns of the Vatican ; the vermin went on devouring, and led by Jesuits bared every spot of its nutriment ; everything was corrupted ; property fell as if by magic from its owners' hands ; peace fled before the spoilers, and discord blighted domestic happiness : but still the monarch's weakness encouraged their audacity and even protected them from the vengeance of an indignant people !

He acted more vigorously at Leghorn where he invited the numerous Dutch and English pirates who infested the Mediterranean after the war, to settle in safety, free from the conse-

* Literally the *useless* or *unproductive* citizens.

quences of every crime not actually committed in Tuscany. In 1590 and 1592 laws were made to encourage all settlers there, and when Clement VIII. declared Ancona to be a free port in 1593 Ferdinand also published a proclamation permitting subjects of any nation to partake of the rights and privileges of Leghorn. This was mainly intended to favour the Jews, and formed the basis of that city's freedom and universal neutrality; these were subsequently acknowledged and guaranteed by all European powers at every general peace, and as often broken by the strongest. Thus was completed the great national work of Ferdinand I., an enlightened and honourable achievement, accomplished solely by the arts of peace, without injustice or bloodshed, and essentially conducive to human happiness.

His engineering projects were of a bold conception; for instance, the draining of the Perugian lake an expanse of one hundred and three square miles, was worthy of praise, and had it been properly seconded by the Roman engineers 2,000,000 of ducats were expected to be gained by an estimated outlay of one-twentieth of that sum; the desiccation of Val-di-Chiana was his great object and partly accomplished, but as this subject will be hereafter noticed it is now only necessary to observe that the lake of Fuccechio, the plains of Pisa, and the Val-di-Nievole, all bear testimony to Ferdinand's wish of ameliorating the physical condition of Tuscany and promoting agriculture even at the expense of commerce. The Senese Maremma too was not neglected, but a fatality seemed to attend the Medici in that quarter, and both their legislation and drainage were singularly pernicious.

The ruinous corn-laws of Francis I. had reduced that province nearly to desolation, and the whole drift of his regulations up to 1572 actually assisted marsh miasma in depopulating the country, either by death, or emigration to the neighbourhoods of Castro, Ronciglione, Pitigliano, Santa Fiore and Scanzano. Notwithstanding the devastations of war this province

was recovering a little of its ancient energy under Cosimo I. who left the corn trade free as in the days of liberty ; he thus maintained an agricultural spirit, and the increased cultivation, and cattle trade from 1560 to 1572 proved his wisdom as far as it extended. Francesco's accession was more deadly than the miasma, and the broad alluvial plains of the Maremma were made subservient to Florence alone ; they were equal to this supply and far beyond it, had any other outlet been allowed for their produce ; but it was a maxim of Francis that Siena should be squeezed dry for the sake of the capital, by which he almost realized the fable of the golden eggs. The mutual accusations of Florentines and Senese about ruining that province induced Ferdinand to think of separating the Maremma and placing it under Florentine jurisdiction ; but he was deterred by Usimbardi's fears of causing discontent if not revolt amongst a people so sensitive and attached to every vestige of republican liberty, who moreover had not bowed their neck to the yoke so easily as Florence. Siena was always a tender part of the Medician state, wherefore Ferdinand confined himself to road-making and other undoubted benefits ; to restoring Grosseto and generally improving the province, and in 1592 he created a superintending board of drainage, roads, public works, tillage, and cleanliness for all inhabited places. His efforts to drain the great swamp of Castiglione della Pescaia were false in principle as applied to that place, and consequently failed ; and at the marshy expanse near Massa-marittima they were not entirely successful. He planted a colony at Sovana, erected dwellings there, provided every sort of accommodation for the colonists, and encouraged people of capital to till the land by granting them feudal tenures and every other support and favour in his power. He seems to have been quite aware of the advantages of a free trade in corn as it affected agricultural industry, yet in common with every Florentine was so blinded by the silly notion of all the grain leaving the coun-

try that his more enlightened views became dim, and half measures which defeated themselves, were substituted for sound and legitimate acts of government. In 1588 half the crop of grain was allowed to be exported on payment of the full duty imposed by his predecessor, and continued by himself; a useless boon, because the tax alone absorbed all profit, independent of the vexatious interference from crown officers and all the annoying impediments of a jealous legislation. Ferdinand however would not give up this tax because he had been foolishly persuaded that the payment of it would fall on the foreign consumer, forgetting that a duty higher than goods will bear, amounts to prohibition and ruins the producer. The long continued scarcity induced him to suspend this absurd law, which however had already done its work, and no exportation followed its reëstablishment in 1599; but a succession of restrictive acts destroyed the remnants of Senese industry and led to exile death and desolation. The weakness and ignorance of Ferdinand on this subject coupled with the usual princely reluctance to relinquish any tax however unprofitable and injurious, made him listen to the clamours of the unenlightened many, rather than to the solid reasons of the instructed few; and amongst the latter more especially to those of his minister Usimbardi Bishop of Arezzo who loudly blamed the law of 1592 for attempting to regulate the price of corn and force it to market against the producer's will and interest. "This law," exclaims Usimbardi, "will do infinite mischief: each man will conceal his corn and use every art to carry back to his own granary that which he has been compelled to take to market, by repurchasing it in a variety of fraudulent modes which never would have been adopted had the price remained free; for in that case the quantity forced by law into the market would have maintained corn at its present price, or a little higher, and so much would not then be kept from market as now is, in despite of all the gibbets and

"sheriffs' officers." "Here" (in the Val-di-Chiana) "I believe there is plenty, but from the above cause we have the appearance of scarcity." Such attempts, absurd and pernicious as they are, to compel the price of food and money, are not yet relinquished even in more enlightened countries than Tuscany was at that epoch.

The spirit, riches, and as yet unexhausted energy of Florence, the comparative healthiness of its climate, the denser population of its territory, the fewer opposing difficulties to agriculture, and the impulse given to it by the Medician government, in some degree neutralized the evils of such legislation; and repeated scarcities by maintaining corn at a high price attracted capital and produced agricultural competition; for it was argued that while any arable land remained untilld it would be mere folly to rely on strangers for subsistence, and that commerce and manufactures should be made subservient to agriculture, and used only as waste-pipes for the surplus of predial labour, produce, and capital. The tide in fact set so strongly towards agrarian speculations that even merchants who had been long resident in foreign countries, such as the Gerini and Corsini from London, the Torregiani from Nuremburg, the Ximenes from Portugal, besides many others, renounced trade, returned to Florence, and employed all their capital on the land. Many rules were established to define the reciprocal obligations of proprietor and farmer, and several laws touching the introduction of white mulberry-trees were consolidated and published in 1607, but assisted in their effect by a vast and gratuitous distribution of plants from the grand-ducal nurseries; nor were the olive and vine less fostered or less prosperous, so that Tuscan husbandry soon became celebrated as the most flourishing in Italy.

From this branched forth the more elegant and refined, though less useful taste of gardening, which rapidly attracted the rarest ornamental exotics of the world and Ferdinand's

private garden became the model of all subsequent pleasure-grounds in Tuscany. The Botanic Garden at Pisa was established in 1593; and through the exertions of Casabona and Caccini, Lombardy, Candia, and all the East were skilfully botanized. But this powerful impetus so suddenly imparted to agriculture by fashion, interest, and princely example, did not destroy the ancient mercantile spirit: Ferdinand himself entered largely into trade and promoted it amongst his subjects, yet abstained from that retail competition which disgraced the reign of Francis. He nevertheless monopolized the corn-trade during four long years of famine, with enormous profits that would have been better left to his people: four galleons with English and Dutch passports were continually running between Spain and Tuscany, freighted by merchants at a high rate for their superior safety, and Ferdinand's banking-houses in all the principal places of Europe added greatly to his commercial gains. The contraband trade with America, carried on through Dutch and English letters of marque, and his secret share of all prizes made from Spaniards, were another source of profit which supplied the enormous expenditure of his reign and the cost of a brilliant court. He was supposed by cotemporaries, but probably with the usual exaggeration, to be worth 20,000,000 of ducats; an enormous sum equal to between 11,000,000 and 12,000,000 sterling of the present day, *weight for weight*, most part of which must have been thrown out of general circulation.

The great fair of Pisa established in 1588; the free port of Leghorn; and the general facility imparted to commerce and manufactures throughout Tuscany, opened new roads and resources for industry according as the long-continued divisions in France shut up many of the old ones. The banking trade, the staple commerce of Florence, had left its ancient haunts, and settled seaward, so that when Mary of Medicis passed through Lyon only three Florentine houses remained, two of

which were about to withdraw from the city. The financial measures of Sully tended, by high duties, to exclude those foreign commodities which interfered with the silk manufacture just then established, although against this opinion; wherefore cloth of gold, silk, and coarse woollens took another direction and found a market in Spain and Great Britain. Ferdinand was unsuccessful in his efforts to establish a transit trade between Italy and England through France: his plan was to direct the stream of commerce from Leghorn on to Antibes, and thence over to Calais, which was to be the northern emporium while Leghorn became the southern depository connecting Italy with the Levant, and was intended exclusively to absorb the Mediterranean carrying and insurance trade: but Sully opposed this because he considered France entirely agricultural, and probably feared the evil of rapidly-accumulated wealth and its attendant evils.

Although subject to the inherent vicissitudes of trade as well as these extraneous influences, the manufacturing industry of Florence still held its ground, and no less than 300,000 crowns were annually sent to Naples and Sicily for raw silk alone; to avoid this the culture of the mulberry was much encouraged, and full 3,000,000 of crowns' value was manufactured every year in silks, gold and silver tissue, and coarse woollens, which the fair trader carried to Spain and England, and the smuggler to America. The Florentine bankers, though wealthy, were fearfully shaken when Philip II. declared Spain insolvent and withdrew the assignments of revenue or commerce which had been made to pay the principal and interest of Francesco's loans; but Dutch and English trade, and the American forced trade also practised by them, together with a taste for long voyages, and the general spirit of enterprise with which they imbued Tuscany, in some measure compensated these misfortunes and imparted fresh vigour to Florentine commerce, while its extension to almost every part of the world caused the intro-

duction of many new commodities : amongst these the cacao-nut and the chocolate made from it, were first brought to Florence from Mexico by Francesco Carletti.

Many new arts were also added to Florentine industry ; several of mere luxury (reserved under Francis for princely eyes alone) after Ferdinand's accession were collected in the gallery for public use and amusement : all the artists except John of Bologna, Billivelt the goldsmith, and one musician, named Paulo Paluzzelli, were placed under the superintendence of a Roman called Emilio de' Cavalieri as director-general ; these included a great variety of professions such as gardeners, porcelain and glass manufacturers, and even distillers. The *Pietre commesse* or art of Florentine mosaic arrived at so high a state of excellence under Ferdinand that even portraits were attempted in this delicate and costly composition, and the splendid mausoleum of San Lorenzo was designed by Don Giovanni de' Medici under his brother's auspices, but only commenced in 1604 by Matteo Nigetti. To the age of Ferdinand also if not partly to his taste, the lovers of music are indebted for the Italian opera : Jacopo Peri invented "*recitativo*," and the immoderate love of that sort of harmony, in which spirit and character and feeling are sacrificed to a merely scientific combination of melodious sounds *, soon spread over all Europe and perhaps had some share in emasculating the Italian character. Soft voluptuous strains may help to temper and refine a savage race, and so do service ; but when this is done they may go beyond the mark and sink a nation to effeminacy, "and all that taste and science can bring afterwards to the task," says Moore, "does no more than diversify by new combinations those first wild strains of gaiety or passion into which nature had impressed her original inspiration" †.

* "*They're douff and dowie at the best we' a' their variorum*," says the old Scotch song, with a degree of truth which is perhaps oftener felt than acknowledged.

† Hist. of Ireland, vol. i., p. 317.

The first essay of this attractive pleasure was the recitation of "*La Dafne*" a pastoral composed by Ottavio Rinuccini in 1594; in 1600 at the marriage of Maria de' Medici it was considered to have nearly arrived at perfection in the "*Euridice*;" and in the "*Arianna*" eight years after. At first the airs alone were sung, but afterwards the dialogue: the music of the former is said to have been composed by Emilio Cavallieri and improved by Giulio Caccini, generally called Giulio Romano; but Peri alone has the credit of the dialogue*.

The ablest physicians of the day were attracted by liberal salaries to settle in Tuscany and direct the study of medicine at Pisa, and this led to that of botany, and also natural history, of which the first regular museum was there established. The mathematics also began to assume a new and deeper interest under Ferdinand: Filippo Fantoni was professor of that science at Pisa in 1588, and Ostilio Ricci of Fermo, who was then chief mathematician to the court, became more noted as the master of the illustrious Galileo. He was the engineer who constructed the works of Iff; and besides him, Bernardo Buontalenti, Buonajuto Lorini, author of a treatise on fortification; Giovanni Altoni, Antonio Lupicini, Gabriello Ughi, Alessandro Pieroni, who built Leghorn, with many others of great talent issued from the Florentine school of civil and military engineers and spread its reputation in Germany and Hungary. By the influence of Ostilio Ricci the great Galileo Galilei was appointed professor of mathematics at Pisa in 1589 and remained there until 1592, when partly in consequence of some dispute with Don Giovanni de' Medici and partly annoyed by the reptiles that envied his fame and abilities he resigned and retired to Padua. Ferdinand recommended him to the protection of Venice, and in 1608, on discovering the full value of the lost jewel, recalled this immortal spirit to Florence but died ere he again beheld him. As a man of

* Galluzzi, Lib. v., cap. xiii.—Osservatore Fiorentine, vol. ii°, p. 168.

letters Ferdinand enriched his country by a collection of rare manuscripts made with great pains and industry in Egypt, Persia, and Ethiopia, by Giovanbatista Vecchiotti, and thus added great value to the Medician library *.

In ancient times when kings were little better than military chiefs, when life was more active than reflective, when monarchs lived roughly and mixed with, and knew their subjects, a succession of able rulers was not uncommon, and this was especially remarkable amongst the first sultans of Turkey; but in these latter days there seems to be some strange exclusive influence within the circle of a crown which withers intellect, and weakens character; and after a couple of generations degenerates the race that wear it. With Ferdinand, although inferior to his father and occasionally wanting even the firmness of his brother, expired all the more vigorous and masculine spirit of the Medici, and his son Cosimo II. raised the national hope rather by his professed attachment to Ferdinand's memory, and consequently to his men and measures, than by any symptoms of real vigour either in mind or character. A youthful sovereign; wealthy, weak, and inexperienced, became a prominent object for political speculation amongst the states of Europe: it is true that his grandfather at an earlier age mounted the Florentine throne with but few friends and no resources, amidst republican turbulence, civil rage, and the frenzy of expiring liberty; and he repelled the strife of faction and trampled everything beneath him. But his namesake was of a different stamp, and luckily for himself had a different part to play: he ascended a long established throne with attached, able, and comparatively disinterested counsellors, and the people in a state of tranquillity both within and without: but there was a change at court; intrigues, which like taxes never lose their root, began again to sprout, and Usimbardi fell a victim to them although with an honourable deprivation of authority. Philip III., or

* Galluzzi, Lib. v., cap. xiii.

rather the Duke of Lerma, immediately resolved to establish a permanent embassy at Florence in order to govern Tuscany at his will, but was arrested by the dexterity of Vinta's arguments on the jealousy this would occasion at the court of France, already dissatisfied with Cosimo's partiality for Spain. This ill-humour led Henry to discontinue the payment of his debts to Tuscany, and both Ferdinand's services and the treaties of Ossat were vainly urged in support of justice, although the latter had been duly ratified by the French monarch himself. Cosimo's complaints were referred to Sully, who said that Ossat was a mere priest and knew nothing of accounts or politics; that sovereigns were not bound by their ministers' errors; and that it was Cosimo's real interest to cancel these debts and thus merit the king's protection. The high rank and power of Henry amongst European states, and the weakness of Spain both in her monarch and resources, enabled him to assume this haughty and dishonest tone towards a petty and powerless prince, the son of one who had befriended him; and, if Italian authors speak truth, this conduct was more consistent with his strength than integrity. The Duke of Lerma governed Spain; the king was but a gilded puppet moving at his touch and occasionally exhibited to the gaze of the multitude. Forty years of Flemish warfare at a cost of 200,000,000 of ducats had destroyed her finances and rendered the revolted provinces more powerful, while the secret aid of France ruined all hope of reducing them; wherefore it became necessary to acknowledge their independence, to be silent on religion, and to tolerate their commerce to the Indies, before any other terms could be agreed to. In this perplexity a matrimonial alliance was sought with France for which Henry IV. showed no eagerness, and if he could have trusted to the faith of Savoy with whom he was then in treaty, war rather than marriage would probably have been his selection. The expectations arising from this negotiation with Savoy kept Europe in suspense, and a change in its

political system was looked for because the duke's family connexion with Modena and Mantua gave him an influence in Italian affairs which Savoy had never before possessed. This was likely to be increased by friendly relations with France, the staunch ally of Venice, who it was thought would not object to the aggrandizement of Charles Emanuel if Henry desired it, and the popes had rarely scrupled to sacrifice every person and thing to their everlasting nepotism. Peace was therefore in jeopardy: the pontiff tried to preserve it between France and Spain but made no progress in securing even that of Vervins: the treaty of Lyon by which Saluzzo had been ceded to Savoy, decided Ferdinand to seek the friendship of Spain, but an alliance of France with Savoy changed the character of Tuscan policy and made Cosimo II. wish to unite the Medici and latter house in marriage as a safeguard to Tuscany. Negotiations were accordingly begun through Maria de' Medici, but Charles Emanuel had higher views, and Cosimo ended by uniting his infant sister Claudia with the equally youthful son of Francesco Maria II. Duke of Urbino, which augmented the strength and security of both states.

Cosimo II.'s accession to the throne of Tuscany was made remarkable by the discovery of Jupiter's satellites, and the name of "*Stelle Medicee*" bestowed on them by Galileo, was one of those compliments paid by genius to mere worldly rank without merit, which kindly supplies its lack of personal reputation: but the Medici had gained a reputation in the world; this placed them in the heavens; an uncongenial position, which they could not long maintain.

Cosimo vainly endeavoured to unite France Spain and Rome in a league with him and Persia against Turkey, Shah Abbas having sent Shirley, an Englishman, to Florence as his ambassador with proposals to that effect; this was seconded by Sultan Achmet's brother then a fugitive in Tuscany, but the great powers were more intent on European politics than such schemes. The French nobles were eager for war

with Spain; the queen on the contrary looked for Philip's support if her husband died, and therefore endeavoured to effect a marriage between the families; by this she
A.D. 1610. increased her previous unpopularity, especially with Sully and the Huguenots whose dissatisfaction extended to the Grand Duke for having in various ways offended Henry. This negotiation was difficult, for the king was already prepared to enter Germany in aid of the Protestant princes against Austria; but Mary eager to carry her point and supported by Sully's rival Villeroy, successfully proposed Cosimo II. as a mediator between the two countries. To satisfy her vanity Henry allowed the queen to be crowned in the cathedral of St. Denys and declared her regent of the kingdom; but in the midst of all this he was stabbed by Ravillac on the fourteenth of May 1610; thus the knife of a fanatic in one moment changed the fate of Europe, and a new order of events overspread the European world! Spain and Austria again breathed freely, the Protestants of both France and Germany mourned and the former trembled; the Venetians were deprived of a staunch ally; but the rest of Italy never forgave the cession of Saluzzo, and its attachment had consequently diminished. The Duke of Savoy saw his views of ambition vanish; the Dutch sorrowed for a faithful friend, and men in general deplored the extinction of one of those master-minds which occasionally blaze like meteors through the political atmosphere. When a great and powerful spirit, broadly intent on beneficence, is suddenly snatched from the world his loss leaves a wide field for conjectures on what might have been the consequences of a longer stay, and we naturally deplore the event as an universal calamity: but the working of Providence is inscrutable, and as man merely proposes while God disposes, it is probable that such events, though apparently misfortunes, are only the means to a greater, better, and more distant end, which the world is not at the time sufficiently prepared to accomplish.

Rodolph II., a weak and despicable prince, remained inac-

tive at Prague while the Archduke Mathias declared himself king of Hungary and usurped the greater part of his family's hereditary dominions. The Archdukes Leopold and Ferdinand, no less ambitious, aspired to the crown of Bohemia and sovereignty of the Romans. Such was the distracted state of the German house of Austria, and as Mathias was in correspondence with the Protestants and secretly hated the Spaniards, the Duke of Lerma on considering all these circumstances became strongly disposed to peace *. In France Queen Mary was instantly acknowledged regent by the Parisian parliament, which stopped all intended opposition from those noble malcontents whom Henry's talents had kept down ; but her vain light and vacillating character was so blown about by this sudden exaltation that the feelings of both woman and wife were utterly dissipated, and the great Henry's corpse lay bleeding at her feet without extracting more than an evanescent shudder and momentary expression of sorrow, which were quickly lost in the empty pageantry of new and exalted rank. Her son Louis XIII. though but ten years old was as fit to rule as she, and the French, averse to all female government, detested that of an Italian and a Medici ! They feared another Catharine, but she wanted the spirit the abilities and the resolution of her predecessor : disgust and discontent ran high, but national feeling still higher ; grief was general and sincere, and the murdered king seemed yet alive in every heart, in every mind but that of his consort ! Intoxicated by the adulation of her own immediate circle she took little pains to investigate the subject of her husband's assassination or to discover Ravilliac's accomplices, and thus gave rise to suspicions of her own conduct : her innocence was doubted, and Paul Sarpi sarcastically remarks that " as the queen does not wish to inquire " further about the king's death she perhaps fears to hear " something that it would be better not to know ; and if the " Jesuits are useful for present business I should not wonder if

* Galluzzi, Lib. vi., cap. iº.

" she were contented to remain in ignorance. In a word, she " is a Florentine " *. Prodigality now became the rule at court ; Concini triumphed and was detested ; he purchased the place of First Gentleman of the Chamber for 60,000 ducats, the Marquisate d'Ancre for 110,000, and the government of Peronne for 40,000, all within the space of two months. It is easy to conceive how this and similar waste of the public money must have mortified the economical Sully, yet so exclusive was Concini's influence that Sully himself is accused by the Italians of propitiating him by large bribes ; to such meanness does a courtly atmosphere incline even superior minds ! So great was the vanity and utter heartlessness of Mary that when Cosimo sent a confidential minister to condole with her on Henry's death, previous to the public embassy, she interrupted him in the midst of his address with an exulting narrative of the whole ceremony of her coronation, and of her having been seated on a throne of nineteen steps surrounded by princes and ministers, so that the church seemed a paradise with all its powers and denominations.

By Villeroi's advice and the mediation of Cosimo II., but
 A.D. 1611. after long delay and discussion, a double marriage was contracted between the royal families of France and Spain, with a political alliance for ten years : this gave great pleasure to Cosimo who by thus excluding the Duke of Savoy from any matrimonial connection with France hoped to secure one between him and the Medici. But the Prince of Wales was now the great object of European speculation, and James I. who wanted money without trouble, looked towards Tuscany where Cosimo was willing to bestow any of his sisters with a portion of six hundred thousand crowns, the sum already demanded by Salisbury from the Cavaliere Lotti
 A.D. 1612. Cosimo's resident at the court of London. On this occasion the queen of England is said to have told Lotti the secret of her own attachment to the catholic faith,

* Botta, Storia d'Italia, Lib. xvi.

the slight ties which held Prince Henry to the church of England, and the fair opportunity then presenting itself for the recovery of that kingdom. The whole transaction was ultimately referred to Rome where Cardinal Bellarmino persuaded Paul V. that the sin of such a marriage would be great, and it never could be right to commit evil that good might come. Cosimo anticipating Paul's acquiescence had already given his word to James and would not at first recede; but ministerial timidity partially overcame his resolution and an ambassador was despatched to excuse him, if it were possible and consistent with his honour; if not, to complete the contract; but the death of Prince Henry in November 1612 removed every difficulty. Ranuccio Farnese reigned at this time in Parma, a worthy descendant of Pierluigi whose fate he feared yet walked in the path that led to it! Frowning, cruel, and suspicious, he cast a gloom over the whole people, and their hatred of him was equally dark and intense. The Marquis of San Vitale along with several other nobles were accused of conspiracy and blood streamed for many days through the streets of Parma: this was followed by an extensive confiscation of property, and soon after by low murmurs of its being an illusive plot, the offspring of fear cruelty and avarice, conceived in tyranny and brought forth in blood! This belief penetrated even into the secret councils of princes, and to dispel it, copies of the trials were sent to them; amongst others to Cosimo II. who immediately and by the same envoy, returned a regular process, executed and sworn to with all the forms of law, which proved beyond doubt, *that the Parmesan ambassador himself and with his own hands, had murdered a man at Leghorn*; a place he never saw and a thing he never dreamed of! This severe rebuff was given by a Medici to a Farnese, in order to demonstrate the facility with which princes could prove those guilty whom they had resolved to sacrifice*.

* Botta, Storia, Lib. xvi.—Muratori, Annali, Anno 1612.

The death of Francesco Gonzaga Duke of Mantua and his leaving only a daughter, occasioned a disputed succession to the marquisate of Monferrato which the Duke of Savoy claimed as a female title for the child, whom with its mother he protected at Turin, and at once took military possession of the country. This decided act alarmed Italy; it offended the new emperor Mathias, who had succeeded Rodolph II. in January 1612 and claimed the power of deciding all disputes about an imperial fief; it also displeased the court of France, raised Spanish jealousy by opening a door for the former nation into Italy, and finally scared the pope, who despatched a nuncio to the scene of action. Venice and Tuscany with more vigour marched upwards of five thousand men to assist Cardinal Ferdinando Gonzaga, his brother's successor in the dukedom of Mantua; but both the pope and Duke of Modena refused this army a passage through their states and the latter even prepared to stop them by force of arms; on this Cosimo augmented his army with eight thousand new troops who easily forced their way to the Ghiara d' Adda where they halted and received Don Cæsar d' Este's excuses. He laid all the blame on Francesco de Mendoza Marquis of Inoiosa the successor of Fuentes and great fomentor of all this dispute, though unsupported by his own government. The Tuscan army under Don Francesco de' Medici therefore continued its march, but a Spanish force under the Prince of Ascoli had already compelled Savoy to restore what had been occupied in Monferrato, and the dispute was finally settled by treaty; Don Francesco then returned to Florence where he found Cosimo in high dispute with the pope because his army had passed over a part of the papal territory. This was made up by great submissions on the Grand Duke's part, for which he was somewhat consoled by a succession of fortunate cruises and small naval victories in the Levant, where a squadron of ten galleys, transports, and other vessels of war continued in hostilities with Turkey. An English catholic

nobleman whom Italian authors call the Earl of Warwick, but who must evidently have been Sir Robert Dudley *, had taken refuge at Leghorn and amongst a variety of vessels of war, all adapted to the Mediterranean, invented one called a "*Galerata*" which outsailed everything, yet wanting the oar was considered too expensive and not well adapted to Mediterranean warfare in the Levant: it carried sixty guns but was soon discontinued, according to Italian authors, for the more convenient galleon. The whole Tuscan navy was at this time commanded by the Marquis Ingherami of Volterra who had distinguished himself in the army of the League and now infused new spirit into that active profession.

The vigour with which Cosimo had hitherto acted was probably owing to the influence of Don Giovanni de' Medici who seems to have possessed considerable talent and great popularity both in and out of Italy; and also to the counsels of Ferdinand's old ministers; but Vinta's death in October 1613 ultimately led to disastrous results for Tuscany and the house of Medici. Curzio Picchena succeeded him with perhaps more talent, certainly more loftiness of character, and a sense of independence that made him scorn to practise those nameless and almost insensible meannesses which generally gain favour amongst courts and princes: but what Picchena spurned was sought with avidity by the less scrupulous Cioli of Cortona, a man described as being without study, parts, or merit, but full of cunning and all that low subtlety of character

* Sir Robert Dudley appears to have been confounded by Italian writers with his father and namesake the famous Earl of Leicester, who was also Earl of Warwick. He seems to have been endowed with great talents for ship-building and engineering, and proposed no less than seven different species of construction, namely: the "*Galleon*," the "*Rambargo*," (a species of light frigate or "*pinnace*"),

the "*Galizabra*," which resembled the Galleas, the "*Fregata*," the "*Galerone*," the "*Galerata*," and the "*Passa-Volante*." (Vide *Charnock's Hist. Marine Architecture*, vol. ii., p. 177.) His great work was called, "*Del Arcano del Mare*," and being created a prince of the empire he took the title of Duke of Northumberland.

which flourishes so well in a courtly atmosphere. He had once served Vinta and thence slid into favour with Ferdinand, but still more thoroughly established himself in the good graces of Christina, and finally gained a complete ascendancy over the young wife of Cosimo whose influence raised him to the height of power. Picchena kept him in check while he lived, but Cosimo was weak, and like his father attending exclusively to foreign politics left all domestic government to his ministers without such sagacity in his choice.

The death of Don Francesco in May 1614 spread grief through the court, and the extreme danger of Cosimo
A.D. 1614. himself, whose constitution could not bear the violent effects of a marsh fever, threw all Tuscany into alarm while it left him an invalid for the rest of his days. The dispute about Monferrato though lulled was not yet over, because neither Spain nor Savoy would be the first to disarm; wherefore hostilities were subsequently renewed, to which Tuscany reluctantly became a party by virtue of Cosimo the First's obligation to defend Milan with four thousand men, but after much difficulty and remonstrance half that number were sent and the
A.D. 1615. rest made up in money. By the mediation of France peace was concluded at Asti in June 1615, leaving the question of Monferrato to imperial decision: but at this time another quarrel had arisen between Austria and Venice about the "*Uscocchi*" a race of fugitives, as the name is said to import, from Bosnia, Croatia and other places. They were settled by the Emperor Ferdinand I. on the northern coast of the Adriatic and soon grew into power riches and naval skill by continually cruising against the Turks; but Venice as queen of the Adriatic felt far from disposed to tolerate such intruders, and a treaty with the protecting house of Austria was intended to bridle them, a thing more easily resolved than executed, for the whole force of Venice had been directed against them without commensurate success. This caused a declaration of

war against that state by the Uscocchi's protector Archduke Ferdinand of Austria, which being promoted by Spain seemed likely to involve Italy, where the only real independent powers were Venice and the Duke of Savoy. A book appeared at this time called "*The Scrutiny of Venetian Liberty*," endeavouring to prove Venice dependent on Germany, which coupled with the advent of haughty and ambitious Don Pedro de Toledo Governor of Milan, argued a secret understanding between the two courts, and Spain's determination to reduce Italy under her rule. The treaty of Asti left all parties armed, uneasy, and prompt to begin hostilities; and the French General Lesdiguières had orders to march to Savoy's assistance: France however endeavoured to maintain peace between that state and Milan, and Cosimo was charged by the emperor to reconcile Venice with the Archduke of Austria. The succours of Lesdiguières and the open correspondence between Venice and Savoy showed Don Pedro that the peace of Asti was a cobweb and that the first brush should be instantly made by invading Piedmont; he therefore demanded the conventional aid from Tuscany which was finally compensated by the payment of 30,000 crowns a month, to the great discontent of Cosimo who insisted that until Milan itself was invaded he had no right to send a man. France and Spain were then united; yet Lesdiguières advanced to the aid of Savoy the enemy of Spain, and on Savoy Don Pedro de Toledo made war almost by virtue of his own authority as Governor of Milan: the Venetians assisted Savoy, and were opposed by Spain while the Spanish ambassador still resided amicably at Venice; and yet openly abetted the "*Uscocchi*," who under the protection of the Archduke of Austria were successfully warring against her! Such was the power of royal lieutenants in those days when kingly squabbles more resembled a street brawl than a movement for any real or imagined national interest: yet, however puerile and perplexed were such disputes, civilization and

A.D. 1616.

humanity suffered as much and more than if they had involved the greatest political interests of the world.

Cosimo who was paying dearly for a war in which he had neither sympathy nor personal interest had been trying hard to keep the peace for his own sake, but finding his efforts useless and feeling secure in the protection of Spain, he attended more to domestic affairs, especially his commerce and marine. The indefatigable Ingherami was still admiral, and had the good fortune to surprise the annual tribute ship bound from Alexandria to Constantinople with a cargo, besides slaves, amounting to 1,000,000 of crowns: on this occasion four hundred and twenty Christian captives were liberated and marched in triumph through the streets of Florence with the victorious commander at their head, who received rewards and honours from the sovereign as he laid the Turkish banners at his feet. Cosimo now aimed at a match between a Tuscan princess and Philip III.; the latter had been sometime a widower, and Lerma was not averse to choose a queen who believing her exaltation due to him might afterwards become useful, an idle hope because the burden of gratitude is that which in general is least easily borne after expectation dies. Savoy was now out of the question; and by the aid of priests, ministers, and royal confessors, a Medician princess was selected in preference to any other: Philip however being still undecided in his wish to marry, requested that Christina would reserve one of her two eldest daughters free in case he should require a wife, and give the other to the Duke of Mantua who had already asked for her. The Princess Caterina was accordingly married to Gonzaga, in the carnival of 1617, Eleonora being reserved for Spain, and thus were these princesses sold like chickens to the most promising customer. Toledo's heavy demands for the defence of Milan were not all that Cosimo had to withstand; the Duke of Ossuno also insisted on the coöperation of his galleys against the Dutch fleet, which had just

A.D. 1617.

entered the Mediterranean in aid of Venice; but the Grand Duke positively refused this even at the risk of offending so formidable a neighbour as the Viceroy of Naples. The murder of Concino Marquis d'Ancre at Paris and the execution of his wife Eleonora Dori as a witch, with the confinement of Queen Mary herself had entirely changed the aspect of courtly affairs in France, and the new favourite Luines, a descendant of the Florentine Abbati, succeeded to the money the rank and the influence of his hapless predecessor. Louis XIII. imagined that he himself reigned, but Luines like Lerma directed all, and for the same reasons wished to remain at peace; yet he pushed on succours from Provence, and war still raged in Lombardy while these ministers were negotiating. Peace was finally concluded on the sixth of September at Madrid with nearly the same conditions as at Asti for Savoy and Spain; and as in the treaty of 1612 for Venice and Austria; so that no war need have taken place and great national misery might have been spared. But though Italy rejoiced in this peace the Spanish lieutenants Toledo and Ossuna, who acted more like independent sovereigns than responsible ministers, were not disposed to execute it, and indignation became general: Cosimo was alarmed not only by this delay but by the conduct of Louis XIII. who at three days' notice had sent the Tuscan ambassador out of France for corresponding with the queen-mother, for his relationship with Concini, and for other subjects of dispute with the Grand Duke on naval matters. This was however amicably arranged and the obnoxious Bartolini succeeded by the Cavaliere Guidi with instructions to urge a strict execution of the late treaty and the recall of Toledo and Ossuna by Spain: the former was accordingly replaced by the Duke of Feria, but the latter with Bedmar at Venice, was still permitted to remain, although their hatred to that state was the principal cause of disregarding the peace. The consequence was, or was asserted to be, a conspiracy to

A.D. 1618.

surprise and burn Venice, murder the whole Senate, and annihilate the republic: Ossuna and Bedmar were accused as the authors, a number of unfortunate people were executed; a full relation of the conspiracy was published, and solemn thanksgivings offered up to Heaven for the public salvation; yet the whole plot was doubted like that of Parma, and believed to be a fabrication to inculcate the Spaniards! The court of France, which had an interest in believing it, was the first to doubt, and their ambassador even remonstrated with the Doge of Venice on the subject: Philip, as was to be expected, reproved Gritti the Venetian ambassador at Madrid for the calumny, but the Venetians of course were constant in maintaining the reality of the plot, which however still remains unproved; for the labours of Daru although bearing every mark of veracity have not yet succeeded in convincing the world of the extent of Venetian wickedness*.

Peace was not attended by tranquillity, and an universal ferment still maintained the public mind in suspense and anxiety, because without taking any part in kingly quarrels for themselves, the people were no less sufferers by the calamities of war. Mantua, Milan, Naples, were all either secretly at work to avoid, or openly refusing to accomplish the conditions of peace: the Duke of Lerma was made a Cardinal and had at last fallen from royal favour, the imbecile Philip endeavouring to rule alone: spirits were boiling up in France, and Germany was troubled by the revolt of Bohemia against its king, Ferdinand of Austria, and the agitation of the Protestants: the Emperor Mathias was fast going, and Ferdinand in addition to rebellion saw a strong opposition preparing to exclude him from the empire. He had no resources and applied to Cosimo for assistance, who was not wanting: funds were provided, a regiment of cavalry was raised in Germany and joined by three Tuscan officers, one of whom the Cavaliere Ottavio Piccolomini

* Muratori, *Annali*.—Daru *Hist. de Venise*.—Galluzzi, *Lib. viº, cap. vº*.

became celebrated in the annals of Austria. The rapacity of Luines had disgusted France; the queen-mother, long a state prisoner at Blois, began to excite pity; a design formed by the Abbé Rucellai, the Duke d'Epemon, and others, and clandestinely assisted by Cosimo, succeeded in releasing and conducting her to Angoulême where she was soon surrounded by the favourite's enemies; and as Louis was further alarmed by the movements of the Huguenots he refrained from openly attacking his mother and her party. Cosimo before he mixed in this plot consulted theologians about its legitimacy; but even after a conviction of its rectitude he would have belied his race had he executed it without an intrigue; wherefore in the very heat of the conspiracy he despatched a monk openly to Blois for the purpose of publicly exhorting Mary to quiet resignation and obedience to her son! The Pontiff and Philip III. interfered as mediators, and Louis was finally induced by Cardinal de la Rochefoucault to grant an amnesty for all past offences and allow of the Queen's honourable return; not however before she had escaped from an attempt to blow her up in the castle of Angoulême! The banished Florentines of her party were then permitted to return, and Bartolini resumed his former station at the court of Louis.

The Elector Palatine's assumption of the Bohemian throne and the difficulties of the new emperor Ferdinand II. were so connected with religion in France, and calculated to inspire so much confidence and even audacity in the Huguenots that both Louis and Philip resolved to support the house of Austria in Germany; but on seeing this the Duke of Savoy at once shifted from the adverse party and offered his personal service with twelve thousand men to the emperor, on the sole condition of being declared the only king in Italy. The contract of marriage concluded in 1619 between the Prince of Piedmont and Christina second daughter of Henry IV. had connected him with that family and he now

A.D. 1619.

A.D. 1620.

offered Ferdinand his own second daughter with an enormous fortune to accomplish this object of ambition. Such prospects of exaltation alarmed Cosimo for his own independence, which alarm he endeavoured to communicate to Spain on account of Milan, and at the same time offered one of his sisters with a large dower and a large loan to the Emperor to neutralize the proposal of Savoy and induce Ferdinand to grant him the investiture of Piombino the constant object of Medician ambition, and as constantly opposed by Spain. Neither project succeeded on account of Philip's opposition who feared to exasperate the Duke of Savoy whom he had managed to disengage from both Venice and Holland: between Spain and the former Cosimo was allowed to mediate, and Ossuna being recalled and Venice freed from his intrigues and hostilities, she promised in return no longer to assist the rebellious subjects of Austria. In France the apprehensions of Mary and Luines in antagonist action prevented her appearance at court, and finally compelled her to arm, but without any offensive movement. Louis XIII. called in the Grand Duke of Tuscany as a peacemaker, and by the subtlety of Bartolini and Richelieu Bishop of Lucon, who favoured Luines, she was persuaded to disarm and repair to court where natural affections resumed their force and all ended in a complete reconciliation.

A cruel exterminating religious war flamed forth about this period against the Grisons, through whose country Spain wanted to establish a permanent communication between Milan and Germany: the inhabitants opposed this; it was the only pass for their French allies into Italy, and they were on the eve of an alliance with Venice the enemy of Spain, whose territory bordered on their own. Spain persisted; religion was made the pretence for war; the pope interfered; the most shocking cruelties and dreadful persecutions were committed, and the wretched people suffered the combined miseries of a religious, political, and aggressive warfare! The Grand Duke was em-

ployed by Pope Paul V. as a mediator between France and Spain, but that pontiff's death called off his attention to the conclave and the poor Grisons were still butchered with impunity*.

Cardinal Alessandro Ludovico of Bologna was elected Pope on the ninth of February 1621 by the name of Gregory XV. and on the twenty-eighth Cosimo II. whose A.D. 1621. health had been long suffering died of inflammation on the lungs to the regret of every class of his subjects. He seems to have been a prince of gentle character, clement tolerant and cheerful, with a friendly and social disposition, some literature, and a strong inclination to national peace and tranquillity, not only for Tuscany but throughout Europe: without much talent he acted on several occasions both prudently and boldly, and though devoted to peace he showed himself prompt and energetic when a demonstration of military force became necessary, and was as free from duplicity as could then be fairly expected from a monarch and a Medici. He promoted hilarity even when disease rendered him incapable of sharing it, for he liked to see others merry: he encouraged arts and literature with all the taste if not all the talent of his race; and for the more important affairs of state he relied principally on Picchena, whose qualities he had the good sense to discern and appreciate, but in less important matters allowed both wife and mother to interfere. Cosimo's principal object having been peace, no great calamity troubled his reign, and to his honour be it recorded, he lived without the hate and died with the regret of his people.

Much good sense was shown in the disposition of his will, except in one important point, the leaving two weak and ordinary women to conduct the government; nor perhaps was it a lesser imprudence to suppose that a dead sovereign's testament would be respected beyond what suited the expediency of the governing powers, if there were no superior authority to guarantee its execution. Cosimo II. died in the thirteenth year of his

* Muratori, *Annali*, Anni 1620-1621.—Botta, *Storia d'Italia*, Lib. xix.

reign at the age of thirty-two leaving Tuscany altogether more flourishing than at any other period of the monarchy ; it then began to decay, and continued in a state of deterioration until the reign of Peter Leopold of Austria, when a more permanent moral and political regeneration commenced and has in a great measure continued to the present moment, without however carrying out to their full extent the more liberal notions of that patriotic, beneficent and philosophical sovereign.

Cosimo left five sons and two daughters : Ferdinand II. succeeded him at eleven years of age, under the tutelage and regency of his grandmother Christina of Lorraine and the young Grand Duchess Maria Maddalena of Austria : they were assisted by a council of four ministers to which the princes of the blood were to be admissible as private members, except when in the service of a foreign state. The salary of each counsellor was limited to 2000 crowns, and no foreigner was to hold any office of state or even of domestic service in the court. No resident ambassador from any country was to be suffered in Florence ; those of France, Spain, and the Empire being more expressly excluded. It was also forbidden by Cosimo's testament to receive any fugitive prince in Tuscany even though a relation of the regentesses ; he prohibited all private trade by either, as well as the opening of his treasure-vaults except to pay the marriage portion of a princess or to administer public aid in times of general calamity *. The penalty for infringing these orders was deprivation of office as his children's guardians ; and the Senate was charged with the duty of watching over their execution. But how vain is the authority of a council appointed by the crown, to control its own source of power, the throne itself ! All Cosimo's restrictions disappeared like cobwebs before the broom of the housemaid, and Tuscany very soon began to feel the influence of a weak female government. Cosimo II. left two

* *Diario della Città di Firenze*, dall' (anonymous) but apparently of the anno 1613, fino all' anno 1635, MS. time.

brothers, the Cardinal Carlo de' Medici and Don Lorenzo, for Don Francesco had died in 1614 : and also two sisters, Claudia and Maddaleua : his sons and daughters were Ferdinando ; Giorgio Carlo ; Mattias, Francesco, Leopoldo, Anna and Margherita ; the eldest son was ten years old and the princess Margaret was already betrothed to Odoardo Farnese prince of Parma. Don Antonio and Don Giovanni de' Medici still lived, but not long after Cosimo, and of the latter we shall again have occasion to speak.

COTEMPORARY SOVEREIGNS.—England : James I., King of Great Britain and Ireland.—France : Henry IV. until 1610 ; then Louis XIII.—Spain, Naples and Sicily : Philip III.—German Emperor : Rodolph II. until 1612 ; then Mathias until 1619 ; then Ferdinand II.—Sultan : Achmet.—Popes : Paul V. (Borghese) until 1621 ; then Gregory XV. (Ludovisi).—Portugal subject to Spain.—Rebellion of Bohemia 1618, and beginning of the "Thirty Years' War," 1619.—Frederic Elector Palatine King of Bohemia.—Prussia and Brandenburg united under John Sigismund.—George William Elector of Brandenburg in 1619.—In Russia the House of Romanoff dominant in 1613.—Republic of Jesuits in Paraguay, 1610.

CHAPTER IX.

FROM A.D. 1621 TO A.D. 1637.



FERDINAND II.

GRAND DUKE OF TUSCANY.

Two weak untalented and bigoted women suddenly invested with power and riches were likely to do evil, and the first act of government showed their lightness :
A.D. 1621. because Ferdinand I. had been ably served by one Archbishop of Pisa the strange resolution was taken of always having an Archbishop of Pisa amongst the counsellors of state ; and a Medici who then happened to occupy that see was accordingly introduced as a member of the regency. Count Orso D'Elci, Niccolo dell' Antella, and Marchese Fabrizio Colloredo were the others, the Marquis del Monte afterwards replacing the last : Picchena and Cioli were made secretaries of state, the first for foreign affairs, the last for the home department. Being independent of each other they communicated directly with the regentesses, and over the minds of two such women the cunning of Cioli soon established an influence denied to the rougher sense and honesty of Picchena. The new government was not long in exhibiting its real character, or the people in feeling it : moved by the spirit of deceitful and nominal reform they commenced with petty retrenchments bearing hard on the weak and powerless while Cosimo's recommendations were neglected. Intrigue, vengeance, unlawful power and influence, all burst into action

amongst the members of a numerous cabinet exclusively directed by females: old ministers were pushed from their stations by new favourites, especially by churchmen those inevitable leaders of silly women; vanity as usual assuming the guise of piety, solaced and indulged itself, while sincerity and integrity were silently condemned. Not only was there no treasure added to the public stock but that which Cosimo had pronounced sacred, except on public emergencies, was lavishly squandered, and proved of how little force is any dead man's testament without some superior authority to enforce it. Ferdinand I. had calculated on a surplus revenue of 300,000 crowns and Cosimo II. had not increased the expenses, but all was engulfed in the reckless improvidence of his wife and mother, and unattended by any public relief. The marriage contracted in 1609 between Claudia daughter of Ferdinand I. and the Prince of Urbino was now solemnized and that duchy allied to Tuscany which its confines already touched. Situated in the heart of Italy between Romagna, La Marca, Umbria, Tuscany, and the Adriatic, and comprising about forty miles of latitude with about a hundred of longitude, it was well placed in connection with Tuscany for preventing any communication between the two extremes of that peninsula, and consequently had ever been an object of interest to Florence. These nuptials were followed almost immediately by the death of Don Giovanni of Medicis natural son of the first Cosimo, who appears to have been a scientific and able soldier with considerable influence and popularity; but this did not prevent the immediate spoliation of his widow and children by the rapacity and vindictive pride of the regentesses. He had married a woman of no rank after the regular dissolution of a forced marriage with her former husband, but by their intrigues this was now declared legitimate, Giovanni's subsequent nuptials null, and consequently his offspring spurious. Both widow and children, after complete spoliation, were persecuted with implacable cruelty by these

two proud rapacious women and an insatiable court, all equally intent on plunder! Bandied about from prison to convent the unhappy creature at last expired of pure and heartless persecution, inflicted by female malignity, supported by papal infamy, by priestly cunning, sycophants, and dishonest lawyers*.

Philip III. of Spain died in March 1621 leaving the shell of that royalty which he had occupied, to his son Philip IV. who with even less intellect added youth and inexperience to Spanish misfortune. Another band of favourites succeeded, amongst whom Don Baltasar de Zúñiga and his nephew the Count-duke Olivarez assumed the lead, for the Cardinal-duke of Lerma, the firmest supporter of the Medician dynasty at the Spanish court, had already retired and died in obscurity†. By the united exertions of Pope Gregory and Bassompierre the French ambassador at Madrid coupled with those of a Medici Archbishop of Pisa, the Valteline horrors were arrested, and with due regard to the Roman Catholic faith, that province was awarded to the Grisons: but a treaty in the cabinet and its execution are not always identical; this one dissatisfied all parties and none more than the Grisons themselves, who continued hostilities but were finally overcome by the Duke of Feria‡.

Meanwhile the imbecility of Tuscan government had already destroyed its weight in foreign cabinets, and a dispute about Eleonora Concini's property almost caused a rupture with France had not the death of Luines and the re-ascendancy of Queen

A.D. 1622. Mary restored tranquillity. The Tuscan regency alive to its own weakness, vainly endeavoured to unite all the Italian princes in one league, but failed because Venice would not

* "Discorso del Sig.^r. Cosimo Baroncelli fatto a suoi figlioli dove s'intende la Vita di Don Giovanni de' Medici figlio naturale del Gran Duca Cosimo I.^o. con la Morte di Concino Concini e della Dionora Bosi (Eleonora Dori) sua moglie e della Signora Luija (Livia) Verrazzi moglie del sudetto

Don Giovanni de' Medici." (*Manuscript in the Author's possession.*)—Galluzzi, Lib. vi., p. 36.

† These ministers are celebrated in Gil Blas, a work which a native only could have originally written.

‡ Muratori, Annali, Anno 1621.

include Spain, and the pope solely intent on family aggrandizement feared to affront her by admitting this exclusion. Prince Frederic of Urbino soon died from the effects of debauchery, wherefore to secure the connection and ultimate inheritance of that duchy a marriage was contracted between Victoria the infant daughter of his widow Claudia and her cousin Ferdinand II. The Church claimed this duchy on the strength of King Pepin's pretended endowment and other remote titles, A.D. 1623. besides protections and acts of sovereignty, which according to ecclesiastical writers proved it to be a fief of the Church; and its reversion to the family of Pope Julius II. was not forgotten though occurring by adoption alone and consequently against the ecclesiastical pretensions. The contract of marriage was nevertheless concluded and Claudia with her infant daughter returned to Florence, bringing at least on parchment, the whole inheritance of Urbino as a dowry, at the grandfather's death.

Gregory XV. died in August 1623 and was succeeded by Urban VIII. of the Florentine family of Barberini, but originally from Semifonte whence they removed after the subjugation of that state by the latter in 1202*. He was still fresh in years but stale in dissimulation, injustice, and heartless ambition, and immediately marked the feeble Urbino for his own: the hooded snakes of the Vatican soon wound themselves so artfully round that aged doting prince as to extract a declaration that all the Urbanese dominions should ultimately devolve to the Church. The instant this point was gained Urban A.D. 1624. moved troops to the frontier, the weak and silly regentesses were dismayed, their ministers duped, and a completely successful intrigue delivered the rights and property of two defenceless children entirely into the pontiff's hands. This hypocrite kept the octogenarian duke continually encircled and tormented by cunning priests, who squeezed even the allodial property from his expiring grasp while the imbecile regentesses

* Platina, *Vite de' Papi*, p. 736.

were flattered with papal compliments and clerical adulation. The unhappy duke in vain implored these tormentors to let him die in peace! To his death they had no objection, but not in tranquillity, or until all his property was firmly secured to the pontiff! No time could have been more favourable to the designs of an ambitious pope, for the Valteline passes had been placed in his charge by the second treaty of Madrid, and following the maxims of Philip II. the Spanish cabinet was averse to any aggrandizement of an Italian prince, besides being in want of the pontiff's aid in settling a marriage then in progress between the Infanta and Charles Prince of Wales: the emperor also needed Pope Urban's assistance against the Protestants; but Venice would willingly have interfered to stop this spoliation had not the Tuscan regency deprecated war and above all things dreaded ecclesiastical censures*.

In France the power of Richelieu hourly augmented and no man was better acquainted with European interests, wherefore seeing the dangers of a free intercourse between Spain and Austria by the Valteline, he with Urban's secret connivance expelled the Spanish garrisons and occupied all the passes of that country. The pope's dissimulation, sorrow, and open invectives against Richelieu deceived nobody; his object was to favour France at the expense of Spain which he hated, and having accomplished this he quietly offered his mediation to both: Tuscany at Philip's request also joined him in the latter, but both sides ostensibly prepared for war although Richelieu, intent on suppressing the Huguenots, was indisposed to attack Spain, and on this she counted. The Duke of Savoy armed too, but in good earnest; and after persuading Richelieu to join him in a project to conquer and partition Genoa, he threatened the Milanese and thus gave the Duke of Feria a pretext for demanding succours from Tuscany according to the treaty of 1557:

* Galluzzi, Lib. vi., cap. vii.—Muratori, Anno 1624.—Botta, Lib. xix.

but the regentesses were in bad humour with Spain for her conduct in the Urbino business, and also for refusing a command to Don Lorenzo de' Medici whom they desired to get rid of because his continual reproaches about that duchy annoyed them. A second marriage of Claudia Princess of Urbino, to the Archduke Leopold of Inspruck, tightened the chain which bound Tuscany to the house of Austria; and an overt attack on Milan, coupled with the invasion of Genoa by France and Savoy precluded any further denial of the demanded succours. Genoese courage with Spanish assistance repelled this abominable aggression, and a secret treaty between Louis XIII. and Philip IV. in March 1626 confirmed the independence of that republic, left the Valteline passes free to France, and replaced the Grisons in the same condition as previous to 1617, the Catholic religion alone being tolerated.

This peace once more unfettered Tuscany, but the death of Duke Ferdinand of Mantua and the weakly and childless state of his brother Vincenzo, engendered new troubles: the French Duke of Nevers now became heir presumptive and raised Spanish jealousy: this occasioned an attempt to prove the validity of a former marriage of the late duke which had been annulled previous to that with Caterina de' Medici Duchess of Mantua; but the regentesses put a stop to this proceeding and then made her governess of Siena, where she seems to have ruled well until carried off by the small-pox in 1629. Their weakness about Urbino had nearly destroyed the influence of Tuscany in the European cabinets, an influence beyond her natural level and hitherto maintained only by the talents or riches of the Medici. The Grand Duke was not yet of age; the Duke of Savoy after suddenly deserting France had again joined Spain, and the latter knew that in the existing state of feeling between Charles Emanuel and the Medici the friendship of one would be secured by

slighting or quarreling with the other. Advantage was always taken of this to promote Spanish objects, and Spain's close connection with Florence prevented Richelieu from uniting French and Tuscan interests even had the government been as powerful as it was despicable; but seeing this new alliance and that the Emperor had overcome his enemies, the regency looked anxiously to him for support.

Vincenzio Duke of Mantua died in December 1627 leaving his dominions to the Duke of Nevers son of Lodovico Gonzaga his grandfather's brother: this prince had married the heiress of Nevers and settled in France, but his eldest son the Duke of Rhetel arrived at Mantua just before Vincenzio's death and took possession of the inheritance. Spain and A.D. 1628.

Savoy lost no time in disturbing this succession and France was ready to support it, but meanwhile the Emperor filled Italy with fear and wonder by assuming to himself the power of giving away both Mantua and Monferrato as if they had devolved to the empire. Venice resolved to assist the Duke of Nevers, and the pope sent a nuncio to restore tranquillity: Rhetel, having procured a dispensation, married his cousin Maria only child of Duke Francis, for whom the title and domains of Monferrato had been claimed as a female fief of the empire: by this marriage the succession to both states was made clear, had that suited the interests of other princes *. Ferdinand of Tuscany having now nearly completed his eighteenth year, determined to travel before he began the labours of royalty, so after receiving some mortifications at Rome from the insolent pride of the Barberini, he visited Germany and endeavoured to terminate the Mantuan dispute with his uncle the Emperor Ferdinand II. Being unsuccessful, he returned home and assumed the government without depriving the two grand duchesses of all authority. A marriage between his sister Margaret and Edward Duke of Parma terminated a family

* Muratori, Anno 1627.—Galluzzi, Lib. vi., cap. viii., p. 77.

feud and united their interests, for both were weary of Spanish domination and sought only a fair occasion to free themselves. The Grand Duke especially, began to feel the treaty of 1557 an intolerable burden for which the duchy of Siena was a poor recompense, not only involving Florence, as it did, in all the vicissitudes of Spanish politics, and all the burdens of war without its profits; but binding her in absolute slavery to Spain, a yoke entailed on his family, who had become little more than vassals to insolent Spanish governors. Don Gonzales de Cordova viceroy of Milan demanded the usual succours on occasion of the Mantuan quarrel in which Spain was the aggressor; but Ferdinand peremptorily refused them, and even drew closer to France by congratulating Richelieu on the capture of Rochelle; he in fact sought assistance from France against the calumnies of Charles Emanuel at Madrid, by whom all his actions were painted in the darkest and most revolting colours. Richelieu's spirit had roused up the French court and infused new life into its councils; by his influence an army crossed the Alps, occupied A.D. 1629. Susa, and forced Savoy to a capitulation which arrested hostilities in Montferrat; but while this awaited the confirmation of Philip, a German army descended by the Valteline and occupied all the Mantuan territory before Nevers was aware even of the imperial movement. This made Richelieu doubt the treaty of Susa being ratified, wherefore he endeavoured to form an Italian league and sent a minister to Florence for that purpose; but by producing the treaty of 1557 Ferdinand showed that however well inclined, a position of rigid neutrality was all he could then promise. Nevertheless he himself was disposed to exhibit a more decided conduct but was restrained by female influence, which yet partially held him in leading-strings: a lease of the Elba iron-mines taken by Francis I. for ninety years from James VI. Prince of Piombino in 1577 was about this time most arbitrarily resumed by Spain, and in connection with other injustices relating to that fief had

so much exasperated Ferdinand that prudence alone prevented a close and declared alliance with France. War, pestilence, and famine once more began to threaten Italy, and every state intent alone on its own welfare endeavoured to stave off these misfortunes. The Grand Duke armed all his militia and encompassed Tuscany with a band against the two first, while his treasures induced France and the Levant to pour in their granaries against the last, and his ministers were everywhere peacemakers; but neither reason, nor justice, nor even humanity, unaccompanied by force or interest, ever incline monarchs to peace. The inexperienced head, the weakened states, and the feeble counsellors of Ferdinand caused a trimming indecisive policy: good friends with the Emperor, hating and hated by Spain, and courted by France, he adopted half measures with all and pleased none. Compelled to be on the alert and constantly armed, he aimed at a neutrality amongst greater powers, forgetting that like a child in a crowd he would probably be crushed in the scuffle. The German invasion was met by a second inroad of the French, while Spain reënforced her powers from suspicions of Savoy, and sent the Marquis Spinola to take the command in Lombardy. Ferdinand meanwhile advised Nevers to conciliate the Emperor and save his dominions, offering himself as a mediator; but the mediation alone was accepted, for Nevers trusting to Richelieu and German wars would make no concessions; and that minister while he crushed the Huguenots at home assisted the German Protestants to revolt, and even descending into Italy enabled Nevers again to invade the Milanese and Spinola to call for the Tuscan auxiliaries, which by female counsel were coupled with a loan of 500,000 crowns to the court of Spain. Richelieu deeming this a strange sort of neutrality remonstrated, but was soothed by the assurance that such succours were merely in execution of former treaties and should never be employed against France, while to Philip IV. Ferdinand declared

A.D. 1630.

that they were marks of pure respect to the house of Austria and quite uncalled for by the treaty of Siena ! The French meanwhile overran Piedmont and the Germans Mantua ; they took the capital and for three days gave it up to plunder and destruction : its Duke fled to Venice, and plague and famine completed the misery of that hapless city ! The wretched people were slaughtered plundered and dishonoured because a debauched sovereign happened to die childless, and to such accidents is human welfare subject, while we still continue to call ourselves rational and civilized beings !

Cosimo II.'s death seems to have been the epoch of permanent decay in Tuscany : a long minority, an imbecile government, a penetrating priesthood, a lavish expenditure combined with other extraneous causes, all tended to accelerate her decline. Dutch and Englishmen had monopolized Spanish and Portuguese commerce, and their improving manufactures had beaten Italian fabrics from the market, so that a painful cessation of the once busy workshops of Tuscany was the consequence : the Leghorn commerce had shifted hands, and strangers now exclusively exercised those trades that were wont to enrich Tuscany by the enterprise of her native population. The Regency mistaking the cause and believing that to be ephemeral which was permanent and principally springing from a great revolution in the mercantile condition of Europe, endeavoured to remedy commercial languor by bounties and other silly attempts at forced encouragement which impoverish the community without benefiting trade, except in some rare cases where capital only is required to set existing materials to work. As trade fell, mendicity augmented, and the taxes were partly paid back in alms to the indigent at the expense of industry ! The heavy imposts of Cosimo I. and his sons were no longer within the nation's means ; scanty crops added to the universal distress, because agriculture having been pressed forward with perhaps unnatural force by the Medici, could not maintain its

position without their assistance after a falling trade began to impoverish the country. Large sums were expended in grain by the government, but famine now stalked onward, followed by disease, and men's minds became depressed; so that the whole population was prepared to receive the influence of a pestilence then devastating Lombardy and threatening a dismal union with its sister evils in Tuscany. Efforts were made to check its advance; the false dicta of physicians were disseminated to allay terror and deceive the people, but by preventing care only assisted pestilence. In despite of every precaution it silently and invisibly entered Florence and mingled deeply with human life ere many believed in its existence: six senators were ordered to superintend the distribution of money and provisions; 150,000 ducats were given to the poor of the wool and silk trades alone, and the private charity of individuals now began to awaken; all wisely directed, not in mere donations, but useful works and agricultural labours*. People at last became convinced of the plague's actual presence, and immediately Lazzarettos were constructed, quarantine houses appointed, the city was divided into districts, and every precaution taken to mitigate that scourge which could no longer be avoided. The grand-ducal treasury was liberally opened for public relief, but the compulsion used to make people enter Lazzarettos spread general terror; each man hoped, and with reason to escape, while isolated in his own private dwelling, but all shrunk back with apprehension from the contagion of numbers within the circle of these death folds†. It was not until August that the most undoubted signs of plague began to appear and then continued throughout the autumn when a general quarantine was established, every family however being permitted to take care of itself at home: the court retired into the fortress of Belvedere; but nobly disdaining

* Diario della Città di Firenze dall' Anno 1613 fino all' Anno 1635, MS.

† Rondinelli, Relazione del Contagione dell' Anni 1630 e 1633.

this shelter while the people were perishing, Ferdinand and his brothers passed forth into the city and with hand and voice administered comfort to the sufferers *! For thirteen dismal months the pestilence raged in Florence and the shadow of death darkened every court and portico every palace and humbler dwelling of the town! Many thousands fled from the capital and its population was diminished by nearly seven thousand souls, besides those who perished in the country! In such times the Board of Health justly deprecated any distinction of persons, wherefore the convents were compelled to open both their doors and their purses to the convalescents, and it was especially urged that the mendicant orders who had been enriched by public charity should now return a little of it to their benefactors. But this was denounced at Rome as impious, and though enforced at Florence, the health officers were excommunicated, called sacrilegious violators of clerical immunity, and indicated as objects of horror! The pontiff with some dim undefined feeling of shame, and what might possibly be due to suffering humanity, moderated the sentence and granted a final absolution, but with a salutary penance for so dark and dangerous an innovation. General anger burst forth, the people refused to accept absolution or acknowledge a censure, as unjust as the motive was infamous, and it needed all the sovereign's authority to restrain their indignation. The Board of Health demanded a hearing but Urban VIII. would listen to no explanation, they were commanded to implore his pardon in public for having performed their duty to God and their neighbour, and moreover to compensate the monks for their outlay. Such is priestcraft †!

In and within a mile of the city twelve thousand people died in thirteen months: few of the higher orders took the plague but almost all who did were doomed: amongst the wretched

* Rondinelli, *Relazione del Contagione dell' Anni 1630 e 1633*.—*Diario della Città di Firenze*, MS.

† Galluzzi, *Lib. vi.*, cap. viii.

ill-fed and needy poor its ravages were dreadful. According to Francesco Rondinelli an eye-witness, its violence in the beginning increased with the increasing moon, but towards the end the contrary; becoming milder as she approached her full and more violent as she waned: at the autumnal equinox of 1630 the sickness increased, and was worst in November; at the winter solstice it began to decline, and in the following midsummer had nearly disappeared; but as the sun increased his distance, pestilence returned for several days with considerable violence. Another curious fact is that in many houses where the plague was introduced by servants, none of the gentlefolks caught it although served by the infected! And a woman called "*Stella*" who attended the Lazzaretto of San Miniato, delivered no less than a thousand plague-struck women during the calamity without being infected, although almost all of them and their infants died*.

The misfortunes then afflicting the Peninsula were partly dissipated by Richelieu, who in conjunction with Venice
 A.D. 1631. raised such a stormy spirit in the north as kept the imperial legions employed beyond the Alps and gave some tranquillity to Italy. In concert with and by his diplomacy Gustavus Adolphus King of Sweden now entered the lists, and distancing every competitor ran his brief race of military glory and triumphed even in death. The same able statesman about this time put down a domestic conspiracy between Duke Gaston of Orleans and his mother Maria de' Medici against himself, and compelled them to fly while he remained master of both king and people. Scorning all religious distinctions except as political instruments, he made an alliance with Holland, seduced Bavaria from the emperor, and conciliated both Brandenburg and Saxony. Walstein fell by treachery; Tilly was beaten from the field, and the great Gustavus was threatening even the emperor's dethrone-

* Rondinelli, *Relazione del Contagione di Firenze, 1630 e 1633*, p. 33. [Edition of 1634.]

ment when he fell victorious at Lutzen ! Charles Emanuel of Savoy died in 1630 and the treaty of Chierasco, made with his son Victor Amadeus and the emperor, restored peace to Italy : while it opened a passage over the Alps to France by the acquisition of Pinerola, and established the Duke of Nevers on the now desolate throne of Mantua, a ruined province with half its original territory. Francesco Duke of Urbino the last of the house of Rovere worn out by priestly torments expired in the castle of "*Durante*" at the age of eighty-two, and Pope Urban VIII. quietly occupied that duchy and Montefeltro in the name of the Church : the latter was an imperial fief but Ferdinand II. was then too much occupied in Germany to make any attempt at its retention*. Ferdinand after much litigation succeeded to his movable property with the allodial estates and some stray castles, all else was engulfed in the apostolical chamber and has ever since remained to the Church of Rome. The Grand Duchess Maria Maddalena with her sons Mathias and Francis about this period made a visit to the emperor for the purpose of managing Tuscan affairs at that court, but her death at Passau in November stopped this project and relieved Richelieu from some uneasy doubts, while the escape of Queen Mary to Flanders gave Ferdinand an opportunity, on the pretext of mediation, to excuse his still openly assisting Spain when his inclinations were entirely with France. All this was received in good part by Richelieu, and Philip's refusal to sanction Don Carlo de' Medici's marriage with the Princess of Stigliano in the king-
A.D. 1632.
 dom of Naples, by which he lost a rich inheritance and richer prospects, still more exasperated Ferdinand. The rapid progress of Gustavus Adolphus and his intention to cross the Alps had alarmed Italy where Philip IV. unsuccessfully endeavoured to form a league against him and France : Urban however, decidedly

* Galluzzi, Lib. vi., cap. ix., p. 102.—Muratori, Annali, Anno 1631.

favoured the latter, and Italian jealousy and interests were so clashing as to render any bond of union impossible. Tuscany sent arms, money, and the two Princes Mathias and Francis, with two German regiments to learn war under Walstein; but the fatal battle of Lutzen with the death of Gustavus on the sixteenth November 1632 relieved every fear and lowered the pride of Richelieu. Philip IV. wishing to improve this occasion and drive the French altogether from Piedmont, endeavoured by means of honours and presents to flatter the Grand Duke into maintaining an army of six thousand men for two years in the Milanese; but he in accepting the offerings declined their object, on account of his pledged neutrality and the wretched condition of his people.

The plague had again appeared at Leghorn and was now rapidly penetrating into the interior; Pisa, Lucca, and Pistoia were already infected and Volterra nearly depopulated: Florence was soon attacked with equal violence, and all the former rigours and precautions were renewed. The severe quarantine regulations disgusted many who had no faith in their efficacy; commerce was once more arrested, and even the common intercourse of life almost entirely suspended: licentiousness triumphed, good order and security hid their heads, and superstition issued forth in all her glory. The Madonna dell' Impruneta was brought to Florence and carried through the city and neighbouring country, followed by dense crowds whose contact gave new vigour to pestilence and increased the evil which her presence was expected to remove. In the manuscript journals of these unhappy days we find recorded the most minute accounts of superstitious and religious ceremonies even to puerility (showing a melancholy state of intellectual abasement before the arts and pride of priestcraft) while the great Galileo's summons for the second time before the Roman Inquisition at the command of Urban VIII., is not even incidentally noticed: but such writings stamp the character

of the age, and its aspect is distressing. By a decree of the "Holy Office" as it was denominated this celebrated philosopher then seventy years of age was dragged before the demons of priestly ambition (not of ignorance) for presuming to believe and teach that the Omniscient God had formed this universe according to the dictates of perfect wisdom; and for promulgating such belief without the sanction of the Bishop of Rome! This glorious discoverer of some of nature's grandest secrets was ignominiously conducted to the same city where once a Pliny and a Cicero breathed, and compelled on his knees to deny the sublime results of an almost supernatural genius and that piercing intellect with which his Maker had endowed him for the purpose of enlightening the world! The bitter jealousy of priests, especially the Jesuits, who thus saw a genuine philosopher start into life and obscure the unreal physics of the schools, is said to have been the true cause of Galileo's persecution; and the character of "*Simplicus*" in his dialogues was taken by them for Pope Urban himself, who was a celebrated defender of the Aristotelian philosophy. This pontiff's enmity to the Medici and all they favoured whetted his malice, and accordingly on the twentieth of January 1633 Galileo Galilei old and infirm, in the most rigorous season, in the midst of plague, and consequently exposed to a long and painful quarantine on the ecclesiastical frontier, with the fate of Carnesecchi before him, began his melancholy journey a victim to bigotry and princely turpitude! The Neapolitans to their honour would never admit the Inquisition into that kingdom, and even the gloomy and cruel Spaniard was on this point compelled to cede something though but little, to public feeling: in Milan the fires of bigotry glared on Christian temples and changed their colouring to that of the Syrian Moloch: in Tuscany the Holy Office had full sway, and there as well as in Piedmont and the rest of Italy war between civil and ecclesiastical jurisdiction was at its height; but the power of Urban

bore down the weakness of royal opposition and trampled altogether on man's intellectual dignity. Victor Amadeus of Savoy a weak and sickly prince, possessed the states and authority but not the spirit of his father, and, Nebuchadnezzar-like, commanded all the Protestants in Saluzzo to become Roman Catholics within two months ! These were the times and this the spirit in which the venerable Tuscan sage was delivered into the hand of his enemies ; to the mercies of a Barberini pope and a jealous implacable priesthood ! And it would be difficult to say whether the demand or the concession was most infamous ! A Medici delivered over his friend Carnesecchi to certain death ; a Medici consigned his friend and master Galileo to unknown but certain punishment ; both were delivered up to exasperated enemies : the first was state policy and self-interest ; the second religious bigotry, youth, fear, and personal weakness : both were disgraceful : but if the infirmities of age and sickness and the fear of inquisitorial torture made the philosopher recant, the effect of spiritual terrors on a weak ill-educated mind may perhaps allow some pity to mingle with the expressions of deep execration so justly due to Ferdinand the Second of Medicis. In June Galileo was allowed to return to Tuscany from his "*Specie di piacevol prigionu**" as Muratori is pleased to denominate it, (for even he cannot entirely throw off the priestly garment) where after residing awhile under the care of Archbishop Piccolomini this great man was permitted to retire to a villa he possessed at *Bellosguardo* and finally to that of *Arcetri* near Florence where he died. "*There it was,*" says Milton, "*that I found and visited the famous Galileo, grown old, a prisoner to the Inquisition.*" He must have been blind too, for that misfortune fell upon him in 1637, and Milton's visit was made in the following year, with all that kindred spirit which helped to

"Spread his name o'er lands and seas,
Whatever clime the sun's bright circle warms."

* A sort of pleasing imprisonment.

The connection between Lorraine and Orleans in the late conspiracy drew down Richelieu's vengeance on the former and gave him a pretext to occupy that duchy : A.D. 1634. the duke and duchess escaped from Nancy in the disguise of beggars, and after a series of adventures arrived at Milan, and afterwards at Florence, where the Grand Duke received them hospitably along with the Duke of Guise then a refugee on account of the same conspiracy : but while her kinsmen were still in Florence the old Grand Duchess succeeded in having the marriage of Ferdinand with Vittoria of Urbino privately celebrated. This young princess had been educated in a convent by her aunt Maria Christina de' Medici whence she issued an adept in all the trifling of a cloistral education and deeply imbued with its bigotry ; but ignorant of the common circumstances of life and impressed with a profound admiration for everything connected with the Church. This intellectual aberrancy had afterwards a most pernicious effect on her son's education which in its turn generated an enervating and extremely noxious influence on national character. The marriage was soon followed by Don Francesco de' Medici's death of the plague, which then infected the imperial camp before Ratisbon, and in France by the uneasiness of Richelieu about Queen Mary's residence at Brussels coupled with the pity her misfortunes were beginning to excite at home ; wherefore he persuaded Gondi the Tuscan minister to visit her privately while passing on other business through Flanders, and induce her if possible to retire into Tuscany ; but she would not resign the chances which national feeling at home and imperial success in Germany had presented, and this success by giving heart to Spain obliged Richelieu to augment his means and if possible form alliances in Italy. Edward Duke of Parma, uneasy under Spanish control, followed the impulse of an independent spirit rather than the suggestions A.D. 1635. of political sagacity and openly declared for France ; Ferdinand was more cautious ; Richelieu endeavoured to gain

him by promises of emancipation from Spanish thralldom and the cession of provinces to be conquered on the Tuscan frontier ; but weak and indecisive, he vibrated between these and the more solid offers of Spain, and finally took a middle course by professing the most rigid neutrality. With a view as was avowed to the general good of Italy he proposed a league between Rome, Savoy, Venice, Parma, and Genoa, against both France and Spain if either should attempt to alter the political condition of their common country ; but the old dispute of precedence between Savoy and Tuscany was the cause of its failure in that court, and Urban expected more benefit for the Barberini race by clinging closely and exclusively to France. Cioli who was sold to the Church and the principal instrument of Galileo's fate, returned from a mission to Rome convinced of the pontiff's determination to oppose Ferdinand and look entirely towards France for his own aggrandizement. The Grand Duke of Tuscany thus finding himself isolated in his neutrality, secretly resolved for his own benefit to afford clandestine succours to France without forfeiting the friendship of Philip the Fourth, and one consequence was that the Cardinal of Medicis became ecclesiastical minister for Spanish affairs at Rome, a post of great political influence, and the title of "*Highness*" was moreover accorded to the younger branches of the Medician family, an honour then deemed of great importance, and previously refused with persevering obstinacy by the Spanish monarchs. Succours were immediately afforded to their fleets and garrisons, and a large loan from the Monte di Pietà completed these mutual benefits. The Duke of Parma soon invaded Milan, on which Ferdinand sent the usual succours according to the treaty of Siena ; but so strong a leaning towards Spain annoyed Richelieu who seconded his remonstrances by some hostile acts against Tuscan commerce, while the pontiff's hollow friendship alarmed Ferdinand for his own frontier provinces : Urban amongst other things claimed the sovereignty

of Castel del Rio a place time immemorial under Florentine protection, and constituting himself both judge and party in the cause would listen to no explanation: he A.D. 1636. refused a cardinal's hat to one of the Medici, and exciting nuncios, bishops, and inquisitors to infringe the rights of both prince and people filled all Tuscany with confusion: Ferdinand ashamed of such humiliation, ashamed of his own subserviency to Christina and the council of state, and above all ashamed of their weak and injurious renunciation of Urbino, finally resolved to emancipate himself and act as an independent sovereign. The deaths of Medici Archbishop of Pisa and Count Orso d'Elci facilitated this, and that of the old Grand Duchess Christina, a princess more worthy of regret as the mother of a family than a sovereign, confirmed it: educated by Catharine of Medicis she inherited more of her bigotry than talent, for it was in union with the spirit of the age, and expended vast sums in the foundation of convents and the multiplying of an already overgrown priesthood, the taint of every branch of public administration and domestic privacy.

The Grand Duke's now unfettered government threw out more sparks of energy and ability than before, and the reconciliation of Parma and Spain gained him credit with European diplomatists, for the transaction was altogether difficult: that Duke's rash declaration of war and simple trust in Richelieu had provoked Spain and drawn down ruin on his country; he was besieged in Placentia, yet still obstinately adhered to the French cause and Richelieu's sincerity. Urban considered this a fair opportunity to oust him from his possessions in favour of a Barberini, and consequently fabricated something as a foundation of certain claims which were speedily attired in all the formalities of law and parchment: but Ferdinand eager to save his brother-in-law negotiated a treaty by which A.D. 1637. the Parmesan dominions were restored, and apparent tranquillity reëstablished in the north of Italy; the conditions

were rather humiliating for Parma and tardily executed, so that all Ferdinand's influence was requisite to keep him quiet when he attended the Grand Duke's marriage *.

According to Galluzzi, the various changes in Florentine government until Ferdinand's assumption of independent authority gave rise to corresponding alterations in subordinate offices, because each successive prince modified his means and instruments according to his disposition, judgment, or political expediency; or more frequently perhaps according to the influences with which he was immediately surrounded. The external policy of an absolute government may be steady throughout a succession of despots; its internal administration may be consistent and immutable as regards the maintenance of sovereign power; but in its influence on public prosperity and happiness it must be variable as man's nature and subject to all its vicissitudes. There is perhaps no government so thoroughly useful to the great mass of society as that of an able enlightened and benevolent despot; but as such visitations rarely occur and never last, more permanent and freer institutions are found to be preferable though charged with every variety of evil. Cosimo II. was wise enough to follow his father's steps with his father's ministers, and his government rolled softly and regularly forward, neither unmindful of the public welfare nor ungracefully sustaining the sovereign dignity both at home and abroad. As early as the latter days of Ferdinand I. the supreme judge or auditor who assisted in forming the Prince's civil and criminal judgments had become weakened like his sovereign by age and infirmity; wherefore to alleviate his duties, the office was altered to a board of coadjutors under the appellation of "*Consulta*" or Court of Consultation. It was at first merely provisional but subsequently received a permanent form and character from Cosimo II. and being charged with all business that needed re-examination or concerned legal rules and rights,

* Galluzzi, Lib. vi., cap. x.

soon acquired extensive jurisdiction as a high court of appeal, and allowed many lawyers, all eager for a share in state politics, to approach the throne. One consequence of this was a general change in the form and character of public acts from their ancient simplicity of diction to legal perplexity, which occasioned considerable confusion in the public administration of justice. After Picchena's decease the regentesses conceiving that a technical accuracy of legal phrase was more valuable than statesmanlike views and language, introduced it into every business of moment, and to arrive at perfection summoned even theology to their aid : thus guarded in conscience and doubly armed by church and law, they imagined it impossible to err, and yet they were undermining the sovereign authority and whole character of Tuscany. These two principles soon acquired a predominance not only at court and in the administration, but generally over the national mind ; they became fashionable, a fashion that neither priest nor lawyer was inclined to change, and litigation and religious controversy spread universally. The regentesses, directed by a council that they could neither vary nor remove, left the administration of justice without that supreme control which for good and evil Cosimo I. and his successors exercised over it : they were intent on lavishing the public resources upon priests, religious ceremonies, and vanity ; the state counsellors were occupied by foreign politics, and each minor tribunal was left to exercise its own authority without superintendence or appeal ; hence partiality, arbitrary judgments, undue influence, and popular discontent. The rising vanity of courtiers and the alteration of ranks increased this evil ; before Cosimo I. Florence knew no dukes, counts, or marquises ; but on the contrary preserving that democratic spirit which had separated her from the feudal system of Italy, she actually excluded them from every part of public government. The vanity of crowned heads to be served by titled persons was early imbibed by

Cosimo but more from policy than lightness : he prided himself on having a *Colonna*, a *Savelli*, an *Orsini*, a *Gonzaga*, or a *Malatesta* at his court, but he was cautious of introducing titles amongst the Florentines themselves, lest they should thus be drawn from commerce. Francis attracted all the feudatories of his dominions to court and insensibly infused a strong desire amongst the people to be distinguished by some badge of greatness : merchandise was in many cases abandoned and fiefs purchased, generally in the kingdom of Naples, but several were formed in Tuscany, and a new rank, directly opposed to the ancient spirit of the Florentine constitution, arose in the commonwealth ; a rank which eventually became as onerous and insolent as it was useless and unpopular. The two regentesses, educated in all the pride of feudalism and disdaining the service of untitled persons, promoted this spirit to the utmost, so that some of the most opulent citizens abandoned commerce to strut at court in the plumes of a new-fledged earldom or more brilliant marquise. The ancient republican rank of Florentine citizen, which had maintained its nobility through so many ages and derived its distinction from the privilege of exercising magisterial duties, now became despised, and no nobility was acknowledged as genuine without the fresh stamp of title and feudal jurisdiction. Even the rank of senator, formerly the highest now became depreciated ; and to restore its value the ancient constitution was infringed by an infusion of feudal aristocracy never before admitted into the ranks of the Florentine senate. Prerogatives, privileges and immunities were eagerly sought and easily won from two vain women by this new nobility, who absorbed every beam that could augment their own splendour and enable them to dazzle the eyes of their fellow-citizens. They persuaded the two Grand Duchesses that the dignity of the throne depended exclusively on a brilliant court, and even as early as 1620 procured a law which restrained within narrower limits all female rights to the succession of

real property. Oppressive game laws soon followed, then the privilege of arming their domestics, and the consequent partiality intimidation and injustice of the tribunals in their behalf, all of which will be more fully discussed in the reign of Peter Leopold of Austria. The citizens, who had hitherto been considered equal to any nobles in Europe, now found themselves abased and insulted; they were still denied the use of arms while the new nobility not only carried, but used them with all that insolence that springs from privilege and impunity. Arrogance outrage and insubordination soon became the peculiar signs of noble blood, the characteristics of high rank, the exclusive distinction of the order; on these they particularly prided themselves and by these they were most ambitious to be known! A greater degree of ferocity was also introduced by the Lombard wars; and the manners of the preceding century even those of Duke Alexander's day, seemed to have suddenly returned to Florence. Excesses of all kinds were indeed common throughout Italy; the whole country was filled with banditti who were systematically introduced into the cities, but most conspicuously at Rome and Milan, as confidential followers of nobility: even Ferdinand II. himself had bravos in constant attendance under the name of "*Lance Spezzate*" who were willing to execute the most sanguinary commands of their master in every part of Italy, or even of the world, and without any scruples. The most resolute of Ferdinand's *Free Lances* was one *Tiberio Squileti* a Neapolitan, and commonly called *Fra Paulo*, from his having been originally a monk: he afterwards became a robber and assassin in the church territory and was notorious for the most daring conduct; but his band having been dispersed he took refuge in Leghorn and there the Grand Duke of Tuscany engaged him as his chief lance! With such an example and perfect impunity for the great, it is not surprising that the smallest injuries were revenged with unscrupulous violence, and deep tragedies accordingly stain the annals

of the time. The story of Caterina Canacci and Veronica Cibo wife of Jacopo Salviati Duke of San Giuliano is a fearful example of jealousy and female vengeance. The house of Salviati, long renowned in Florentine history, still maintained its distinction as well from rank and immense wealth as from near relationship to the reigning family. Jacopo Salviati Duke of San Giuliano was married to Veronica Cibo of the Princes of Massa, a jealous imperious woman whose attractions were insufficient to attach the Duke exclusively to herself, for being young agreeable and extremely handsome, he had many temptations. Giustino Canacci, a Florentine gentleman well stricken in years, wished to marry a second time notwithstanding his having a son already grown up, the offspring of a former marriage : he chose the young and interesting Caterina the most beautiful girl in Florence, and one gifted with all those qualities which are calculated to captivate a refined and sensitive mind : she accordingly met with universal admiration, but held her moral position in society until the Duke of San Giuliano and she met and became mutually enamoured. Their passion remained long a secret from the Duchess ; but once known, Veronica was not the woman to let it continue with impunity. After some unsuccessful attempts to reclaim the Duke she finally resolved on one no less certain than tragical. Sending for three "*Sgherri*" or assassins, from Massa, she gave them short and distinct orders about what they were to execute, and on the evening of the 31st December 1638 guided by Canacci's son Bartolommeo, who was paid by both parties but hated his stepmother, they entered the house which still exists at the end of the *Via de' Pilastri* near the church of Saint Ambrogio. Caterina was at the moment entertaining some friends, perhaps watching for the Duke, who was however known by the other party to be absent, when the murderers suddenly rushed in : the guests instantly fled and the beautiful Canacci with her female attendant, the only being who remained, were stabbed and cut to pieces. Caterina's head was carried as a voucher to the

duchess whose vengeance was only half appeased. It was a common custom amongst the great of those days to send the husband's clean linen to his dressing-room every Sunday morning in a basin covered with silk; but the duchess added Caterina Canacci's head to the usual change on the first of January 1639. When the Duke rose and uncovered the basin he nearly fell senseless, but with much the same feelings as Boccaccio's Gismonda at the sight of Guiscardo's heart, he endured his anguish. Justice then stepped in to punish the assassins but they had already escaped; the step-son Bartolommeo Canacci however lost his head as an accomplice; the whole Florentine population of the lower orders were furious, and to escape from them, rather than from any apprehension of legal rigours towards herself, the Duchess of San Giuliano fled from Florence leaving her name as a by-word amongst the community. This from its peculiar circumstances was an extreme case, and from the quality of the actors excited unusual agitation, but assassination variously modified was common. The Duke never would see his wife again, and was probably glad of so favourable an occasion to abandon her; but this was her whole punishment, and one such fact is sufficient to delineate the disorder of those unhappy times in Florence under the guardianship of the Medici*.

These examples depraved the nation, and from the prince upon the throne to the lowest subject such ferocity became familiar, so that the early republican times seem to have then returned in their most odious aspect without any of their redeeming qualities: the nobles were again rich, powerful, insolent, oppressive; exclusively favoured by the laws, and marked the character of their order by violence contempt and outrage: the people were despised, insulted, and trampled upon in both epochs. In the former there was all the energy of a young and free nation to

* *Osservatore Fiorentino*, vol. v., p. 66. — Old MS., p. 89, in the author's possession.
— Boccaccio, *Decam. Giornata iv.*, Nov. 1^o. — Galluzzi, *Lib. vi.*, cap. xi., p. 150.

withstand their tyranny, and the nobles, depending on themselves alone, were overpowered and humbled: in the latter they were backed by despotic power, while the people, enervated by a century of servitude, had neither force nor spirit to resist and patiently bowed their necks to the triple yoke of priestcraft, slavery, and aristocratic violence. From this general maintenance of assassins, as household servants and regular portions of domestic establishments it is no wonder that refinement and comparative gentleness of manners, so fostered by Ferdinand I. and Cosimo II., almost entirely vanished under female government and the early part of Ferdinand the Second's rule. Few incurred this prince's anger and escaped, nor was his example lost on the nobles; and the clergy, seldom slow in the race of ambition and iniquity, gave a self-interested protection to villains of every rank, by asserting the right of sanctuary and total immunity of churches. Audaciously and insolently opposing themselves to every civil authority, they aided delinquents, encouraged crime, and confounded law justice and order; so that between a weak and bigoted government, a powerful and arrogant nobility, and a proud overbearing priesthood, sovereign authority was diminished, the revenue wasted, the people outraged, industry withered, the laws enfeebled, and a whole country, previously teeming with comparative life and spirit, now languished under the vices and follies of its rulers!

The bull of Pope Gregory XV. in 1591, which asserted ecclesiastical inviolability and the consequent right of sanctuary, formed the basis of clerical operations, and all Cosimo the Second's efforts were insufficient to check them: the subtilty of Roman courts and Urban's hatred of the Medici gave fresh energy to Tuscan priests, and scarcely a cause came before either civil or criminal court into which they did not foist some pretended ecclesiastical right to perplex the judges, and then threatened them with admonition and excommunication if they

presumed to continue the cause otherwise than was dictated by the courts of Rome ; and of these they pretended to consider the sovereign as a mere executor. The Sir Robert Dudley before spoken of as a Catholic refugee who had settled in Tuscany, made himself exceedingly useful, not only in bringing the navy to greater perfection by introducing new classes of vessels, but also by constructing a considerable part of the fortifications at Leghorn : seeing no hope of recovering his native property, he in 1627 instituted a process in the ecclesiastical court of Florence against all the English nation by which that people and parliament, Catholics only excepted, were condemned in the penalty of 8,200,000 pounds sterling. This sentence was affixed to the cathedral, and Dudley absurdly demanded its immediate execution by a seizure on all the English property at Leghorn ! Ferdinand II. and the regency while they smiled at his demand thought it necessary to assure the English both in London and Tuscany that their possessions were safe : Dudley transferred his cause to Rome where the sentence of the Florentine court was confirmed, and a mandate despatched for its execution ! Such insolence was too much even for Ferdinand, and Dudley would probably have suffered for his audacity had not former services pleaded in his favour. But the courts of Rome were gradually absorbing every particle of ecclesiastical jurisdiction in Tuscany, and as rapidly were Tuscan prelates encroaching on lay authority ; so that the whole duchy was becoming a Roman province swarming with friars, who being multiplied and encouraged by Christina augmented at a fearful pace. Seditious doctrines and a general spirit of disobedience to civil law was insidiously and generally inculcated by these mischief-makers, who having great influence over the people incited them by their own example to swerve from public duty and national allegiance, and claim the Church of Rome as a protector ! Such effects and the very power of producing them, argue great suffering from misgovernment and

general oppression, which the church was not slow in taking advantage of: yet only a few years after, when coming from a country so miserably distressed and governed young Prince Cosimo landed in Ireland, even he was astounded at the wretchedness and abject misery of that unfortunate people! And now after two centuries and more of English rule they still remain so!

With such influence over a court which they betrayed, and amongst a people whom they seduced, the priesthood became omnipotent, invulnerable, and a continual drain on the life-blood of society, partly for themselves, and partly for the pontiff who thus made use of them. Relaxation of discipline and immorality amongst all the monastic orders was increased and infected the community at large, but the nuns in particular: Cosimo I. as we have seen endeavoured to abolish the spiritual dominion of monks over nunneries, but this regulation and that of the superintending visitors ceased with him, and the popes confirmed their original ascendancy. The cloistered population was augmented as much from the effects of domestic female servitude, as from an education so austere that the most wretched of a family sought that happiness within the walls of a convent which was denied them at the domestic hearth; nor could the recently increased rigour of conventual discipline prevent such immigration. In 1622 there were no less than 4203 nuns in Florence alone; a thousand and seventy-five in the little city of Prato and eleven thousand six hundred and ninety-one in the Florentine states exclusive of Siena! This was an everlasting source of discord, for the monks while asserting their own authority over all nuns of the same order, refused to make any contribution for their subsistence: the latter therefore with but slender revenues were in constant distress and often obliged for self-preservation to break the cloistral limits and beg that charity from the public which their spiritual directors, backed up by the popes, most heartlessly refused.

Such was the ecclesiastical condition of Tuscany in its civil and social relations with the state ; but we have not yet done with this evil.

After the wars revolutions and other changes in European states from the time of Charles V., manufacturing and commercial industry became more equally spread over the continent and islands of Europe : nations had become their own producers and carriers, and no longer depending on foreign sources the latter proportionately declined : Italy once the centre and soul of European industry was first drained off to the general level and then dried up even below it ; Florentine merchants and bankers had long abandoned Lyon ; agriculture and aristocratic vanity had withdrawn an immense capital from Tuscan trade, but Spain still held forth inducements to commercial enterprise and the investment of money. By loans to the Spanish government Florentine capitalists made a large interest in mortgages of revenue, bottomry on the American treasure ships, and other sources of public revenue placed at their disposal. Spain was in fact existing on loans, feeding on her own entrails by anticipations of revenue, and the resources thus mortgaged were as changeable as light ; varying with circumstances, alternately enriching and impoverishing numbers, but still probably balancing loss with profit to the nation at large. A powerful engine was finally set to work that by superior mechanism absorbed the money trade and established a monopoly which gave the final wound to Tuscan commerce.

The *Monte di Pietà* had from its establishment by Savonarola been of great use in lending money at a lower interest than the Jews and ultimately became a national stock for funding the property of widows and orphans ; but its loans still continued and its funds remained open to public investment : increasing wealth sharpened the love of gain, and a reprehensible desire for mercantile speculations became predominant amongst its managers. A Court of Directors chosen from the citizens go-

verned the corporation, but the Grand Dukes soon mingled in its affairs and shared its profits: through their influence the Spanish loans were first undertaken by this magistracy, which by employing the profits in exporting Tuscan manufactures to Spain, hoped to stimulate the industry of their country with considerable gain to themselves. The project was both laudable and attractive, and its results so fortunate as to tempt others to embark their capital in the same adventure; but in time the Spanish assignments for the payment of interest failed, new loans became necessary as bribes to procure safer mortgages for the old, and private merchants could no longer compete with the vast wealth of the *Monte di Pietà*. This company therefore gradually absorbed all the national commerce both internal and external; even the wool and silk trades were swallowed up by the company's connection in those lines of commerce with smaller merchants whose only chance of existence was by joining it as shareholders. The convenience for supplying Spain with money which a connexion with the *Monte di Pietà* afforded to the Tuscan princes drew their union closer with this company; but in the calamities of 1630 when an investigation of causes was forced upon government, the mischief of so powerful a monopoly became self-evident and a reforming board of six senators was immediately established. They unhesitatingly recommended the reduction of this *Monte* to its pristine objects, and the consequent emancipation of commerce: but the evil was already done, the shackles were too heavy and had crippled it; the people complained that the galley-war against Turkey destroyed the wool trade with that country; and great investments of capital on land reduced both wool and silk manufacturers to destitution. Large sums were borrowed by government from the *Monte di Pietà* to relieve and encourage them, which only reduced the funds of that body without any permanent mercantile relief, and a rapid decay began to spread over the country. Leghorn alone

flourished; it had become a depôt of merchandise for almost all Europe *except Tuscany* whose commerce had passed into strangers' hands, with small advantage to any native unconnected with some foreign establishment! Thirty years after its foundation Leghorn had become too small for the population, and in 1623 was increased by an addition to that quarter which from its similarity of form has been denominated "*Venice*"; but much of this prosperity was almost necessarily at the expense of Pisa, which as the metropolis of an independent and industrious state would have held its rank and Leghorn become its seaport; but as rivals in commerce the advantages of the latter carried off Pisa's population at the rate of one-third in the space of seventeen years; that is from 16,157 souls in 1613 to about 10,700 in 1630. The unrestricted importation of foreign cloths into Leghorn and Pisa, both equally free, and the sharp cruising of the galleys, were two causes of lamentation at Florence; but the time had past for a revival of the Levant trade which was now completely absorbed by more enterprising nations, and if Tuscany could not even keep her own coasting trade out of Dutch and English hands, she could hardly expect to re-establish an old line of foreign commerce in opposition to them. After an unsuccessful attempt in 1632 to begin a convoy trade by means of his squadron and a naval peace with Turkey, which would have left the eastern and African commerce at liberty, Ferdinand's six galleys and two galleasses resumed their profitable cruising at the permanent annual cost of 200,000 ducats to the country!

In a misruled state nothing prospers but vice and knavery, and Tuscany had now become essentially so; for notwithstanding that the Grand Dukes ceased to be merchants at the death of Ferdinand I, courtly splendour still continued with decreased and decreasing means, and the extravagance of female government finally exhausted the treasury. Bad, severe, and vexatious laws followed, and public oppression marched hand in hand

with state necessity : even agriculture declined rapidly, in consequence of an assize on produce and other galling regulations ruinous to farmers and desolating to the country : game-laws, monopolies, penalties, and vexatious prosecutions drove men from tillage to the capital and its vicinity as paupers. whose numbers were recruited by indiscriminate alms-giving ; produce annually diminished, and the state declined *. To remedy this, still more foolish means were adopted, and an attempt to force husbandry shewed the extreme ignorance of government : in 1620 a board was created expressly to watch over agriculture ; its duty was to visit the rural districts and inform itself of whatever land was capable of new cultivation or amelioration, and to teach its owners the best mode of proceeding : this was so far well, at least on the supposition of knowledge on one part and gross ignorance on the other : but without thoroughly informing themselves of the real cause of disorder they in the promptest and most arbitrary manner began at once to apply external force to that which required internal nourishment. No landholder was exempt from this board's jurisdiction ; it could delegate its authority to anybody no matter whom in the provincial cities and towns, and thus compel the proprietors not only to cultivate land that would yield no profit, but to cultivate it in the particular mode the commissioners were pleased to prescribe. The consequence was an accelerated course of ruin, a retrograde movement of agriculture, and new and greater misfortunes to the country ; the peasantry became indebted to their landlords, and were expelled from their farms to maintain themselves by pilfering and highway robbery, so that the nation in the midst of luxury refinement and high civilization was falling into primitive barbarity † ! In this general decline both arts and literature must have been to a certain degree involved ; but as

* Galluzzi, *Lib. vi.*, cap. xi.—*Leggi e Bandi di Toscana*.

† Galluzzi, *Lib. vi.*, cap. xi.

wealth luxury and refinement in the few, are frequent concomitants of distress and pauperism in the many, such things meet with encouragement until a much later period of national decay.

The diminution of that expense which Cosimo II. had still maintained to complete the mausoleum of his family at San Lorenzo, was a great check to the artists so employed, and the workers in *Pietre Dure* were sensibly affected. The school of Giovanni da Bologna was continued with less genius by Pietro and Ferdinando Tacca, and many other talented sculptors unknown to fame, flitted about in the last gleams of expiring genius. The art of Florentine Mosaic was still sedulously fostered by the sovereign whose purse alone could then bear the expense of so costly and beautiful a composition, which has been improving until the present day, and is now exercised by many private artists in Florence. As connected with art the general misery prevented public taste from compensating for any diminution of courtly patronage, and that taste began now to run a less noble course and display itself in vain pomp, splendour of equipage, and external magnificence; so that the ancient chaste and spirited feeling for the fine arts was gradually evaporating. The heavy but imposing mass of Palazzo Pitti was still augmented, though not terminated by Cosimo II., and these labours being continued by the regentesses stimulated Ferdinand II. and his brothers who were men of taste and talent, to adorn it internally with some of the finest works; wherefore Pietro Berrettini da Cortona was invited to Florence and employed in painting the various apartments; other new operations were also commenced but the general distress caused everything to languish.

Nothing in fact can be conceived more deplorable than the condition of the once energetic and flourishing Tuscany under the second Ferdinand: the sovereign himself was weak young and not over capable, his authority undermined by the corrupt

bigoted and even treacherous influence of those about him, and openly assailed by ecclesiastical ambition : he himself was encircled by a band of hired murderers and a body of insolent nobles who being above all law tyrannized over the people with impunity. The tribunals were partial arbitrary and corrupt ; the priesthood daring lazy and encroaching, devoid of religion and morality, and spurning all allegiance but to Rome : a people bowed by misfortune, ruined by taxation, and all their former resources nearly annihilated : agriculture was sinking under vexatious laws, monopolies, privileges and immunities ; trade and manufactures were expiring ; a costly marine ; an extravagant court ; and political dangers which involved a constant and expensive state of armed neutrality. Besides all this the arts were declining, pure taste fading, ferocity of manners increasing, and he who once cast so brilliant a light over this gloomy picture, the immortal Galileo, was languishing life away in a small villa, the victim of bigotry malignity and moral cowardice. Such were the results of female government, a long minority, and a majority with little talent or character. But Ferdinand did better alone*.

COTEMPORARY MONARCHS.—Great Britain and Ireland : James I. until 1625 ; then Charles I.—France : Louis XIII.—Spain, Naples and Sicily : Philip III. until March 1621 ; then Philip IV.—Portugal subject to Spain.—German Emperor : Ferdinand II. until February 1637 ; then Ferdinand III.—Popes : Gregory XV. until 1623 ; then Urban VIII. (Barberini)—Sweden : Gustavus Adolphus until 1632 ; then Christina.—Brandenburg : George William.

* Galluzzi, Lib. vi., cap. xi.—Leggi e Bandi di Toscana.

CHAPTER X.

FROM A.D. 1637 TO A.D. 1670.

FERDINAND II.

GRAND DUKE OF TUSCANY.

THE war was still pursued with undiminished energy by France and Austria, the former, generally successful, saw Spain daily becoming more feeble, while her own troops were firmly established in Pinarolo and Casale, and threatening Italy: the death of Victor Amadeus Duke of Savoy, by leaving an infant sovereign and a female regency, facilitated these designs and made both Parma and Tuscany uneasy. Urban, with peace on his lips, promoted war for the chance of family aggrandizement, and even looked forward to the spoliation of Tuscany; and that state with Parma ineffectually offered their mediation between France and Spain on seeing that nothing was to be expected from the German congress. In Florence a general tax on the grinding of corn, which since its imposition by Cosimo I. in 1553 had also been paid by ecclesiastics, was now increased to reimburse the Monte di Pietà, and the clergy for the first time refused to contribute: they as usual pleaded clerical immunity, and the nuncio even threatened to anathematize any collector who presumed to demand it, while he audaciously asserted to the sovereign's face that no authority adduced by him in support of his right had any value without the pontiff's approbation! This insolence was reëchoed at Rome by the arrogance of all the Barberini,

a brood which had increased the eternal divisions of that city: the streets were traversed by chiefs of adverse factions, lay and clerical, and followed by bands of domestic assassins, the Cardinal Antonio Barberini having always a noted ruffian called "*Mancino*" at his side, the most desperate robber that ever infested Abruzzi or La Marca. The Cardinal Carlo de' Medici was attended by some of his nephew's most daring "*Lance Spezzate*," and all rode armed with the hand on the sword and their eye on the enemy! Such was the state of Rome when the Duke of Parma had occasion to visit Castro, a duchy extending nearly to the gates, which gave its chief great influence if an inhabitant of that capital: for this it was coveted by the Barberini who endeavoured to profit by the Duke of Parma's necessities to purchase it; but becoming aware of their intrigues he returned home without entering the metropolis, and thus disappointed them.

Urban VIII. knowing that the Grand Duke had given this timely information, redoubled his hatred towards that prince, wrested Castel del Rio from the Alidosi family who had held it from time immemorial, and followed up this blow by a movement of troops on Città di Castello with other hostile signs which not only compelled Ferdinand to assemble his militia on that frontier but even alarmed Spain, whose ambassador informed Urban that if a single act of aggression were committed against Tuscany he would march an army into the Roman states from Naples. This was effectual for the moment, as well in arresting hostilities as in quieting the dispute about the flour tax, which was now unopposed, and the nuncio became less insolent.

The low condition of Philip IV.'s treasury induced Olivarez
A.D. 1638. to flatter Ferdinand with offers of honours and office
in order to extract money, amongst other things the
supreme command of the Spanish fleet; but this would have
alarmed France, and he only accepted the Mediterranean divi-

sion for his brother Carlo which appointment, according to the prevailing system of war, did not commit the family chief with any other power. The French cabinet however became suspicious, but Ferdinand proved his good faith by refusing any succours to the governor of Milan on his attacking Vercelli, which he designated as aggressive not defensive, and therefore claimed immunity. Little of consequence distinguished the year 1639 at Florence except a continuance of petty troubles from the Barberini and corresponding insolence on the part of the nuncio and other ecclesiastics; the former had even presumed to erect a prison within his own palace, which was immediately demolished by the officers of justice. Such was the audacity of the priesthood in those sad days and such would it be again if allowed by the laity and governments of the present; the corporate spirit is the same, let the religion be what it will; but happily it is often studded and adorned with many bright exceptions. The arrogance of Urban VIII. and his family had disgusted all Italy, which vainly sighed for the decease of a pontiff who seemed to rise in renovated strength from every attack of illness, and who at one moment meditated the conquest of Tuscany and at another some new explanation of Petrarch's sonnets!

A quarrel between Pope Urban and Lucca for arresting some of Cardinal Francotti's servants who presumed to infringe the laws of that republic by carrying arms, partially affected Ferdinand a portion of whose territory was under the jurisdiction of this prelate as Archbishop of Lucca. The respectful, but firm and successful opposition of that unpretending republic to papal fury taught Ferdinand that humiliation was not the means to adopt with such a court, and he therefore determined to persevere in opposing it; but the political situation of Europe was what now gave most anxiety to the Italian states whose very existence depended on universal peace, the balanced forces, or the tolerance of more

powerful countries. The fate of Lorraine and the progress of France in Piedmont showed how little was to be expected from Richelieu's forbearance unless it happened to suit his governing policy. Besides these conquests he now threatened the Milanese, and his fleet swept the Mediterranean under the command of the Archbishop of Bordeaux. It was repaired and supplied at Leghorn by Ferdinand through fear of occasioning a descent on the Maremma garrisons, which would have brought war into his dominions although pointed against Spain alone. That court was in confusion from the haughty mismanagement of Olivarez and the insolence of Castilian governors and soldiers; Catalonia had revolted; Portugal threw off the yoke and hailed John Duke of Braganza as her king; Andalusia was in a tumult, and the whole kingdom weak suffering and exasperated. Besides this the Neapolitan provinces could scarcely be restrained, Holland had taken some of the most valuable of the Spanish possessions in the east and gained ground in Flanders; the Austrians were unsuccessful in Germany, and Richelieu who more or less pulled every string and set all in action, was everywhere prosperous. Piedmont was one wide sheet of war and devastation from the aspirations of Cardinal Maurizio and Prince Thomas of Savoy, uncles to the infant Duke: supported by Spain they attempted to drive the Duchess Christina from the government and tutelage of her son, and Prince Thomas it was said looked forward even to higher objects of ambition. Christina however would make no tame submissions: assisted by a French army under Count d'Arcourt she successfully maintained her position, and the capture of Turin, after a gallant resistance under Prince Thomas, cast more glory over Richelieu, obscured both branches of the Austrian dynasty, and left Italy alarmed agitated and disunited; but still moved by particular interests and incapable of any common resolution for the public good*.

* Muratori, Annali, Anni 1638-39-40.

This state of things was very satisfactory to the court of Rome, whose ancient and invariable maxim was that quarrels and wars amongst European potentates made them all more obedient to pontifical authority and enabled the church to assume new rights and immunities. The Barberini therefore, perhaps the most rapacious family that ever filled that throne, quietly awaited an occasion of enriching themselves in the midst of the storm which threatened all their neighbours, and Urban's first object was Castro. He began by prohibiting the exportation of grain from that duchy a right assumed as lord paramount; and on the Duke of Parma's refusal to obey, launched forth a spiritual admonition against him which was soon followed by the temporal power of his arms: the Duke resolved to defend himself, and other Italian princes deprecating war, armed also but as yet without any open declaration. Tuscany, Venice, and Modena thus prepared and awaited the event; the Grand Duke endeavoured to terminate the matter more quietly but the fixed resolution of both sides prevented any successful mediation and Castro was soon occupied by fifteen thousand papal troops, who afterwards concentrating at Viterbo threatened further hostilities. Ferdinand assembled about fourteen thousand men of all arms; Modena openly declared for Parma, and Urban startled by this sudden flash of arms denied any ulterior intentions on his own part while he began to collect a second army at Bologna. The Spanish ambassador deprecated this confederacy as a thing totally at variance with Spanish policy and a dangerous precedent, while his cabinet through the viceroys of Naples and Milan offered Pontremoli and the *Presidj* if Ferdinand would openly declare himself for Spain and at once dissipate its suspicions of the league. Olivarez in fact believed that the secret object of all this alliance was not the defence of Castro but a French alliance, a thing which would probably have cost Spain the province of Milan if not Naples itself. Nor was France

herself less troubled at the strange apparition of an Italian league, and her ambassador made every effort to restore tranquillity; but Urban was playing only his own game, and Parma at the head of eight thousand men resolved on war. The term of the papal monitory being finished, on the thirteenth of January 1642, a formal sentence of excommunication issued from the

A.D. 1642. Vatican, principally on the plea of paying the creditors of the duchy of Castro and incamerating the surplus.

This iniquitous proceeding exasperated all the Italian princes, who after seeing the movement of ten thousand men against Parma, formed a new league including Venice Modena and Tuscany for the preservation of peace, with a secret article to assist the Duke of Parma by the maintenance of about fourteen thousand men for ten years. Thirty thousand ducats were immediately supplied to him by Tuscany and forty thousand by Venice, which arrested the papal army in its meditated conquest. Besides this engagement, Ferdinand had assembled an army of nine thousand men under his brother Don Mathias de' Medici, and stationed them at the frontier town of Cortona, as a place of arms, against any papal aggressions in that quarter. Meanwhile the Bishop of Lamegos the new Portuguese minister at Rome was attacked in the open street by Losvalez the Spanish ambassador, each at the head of his ruffian band, and an attempt was subsequently made to carry off the former from Leghorn, but prevented by Ferdinand. The Spaniard retired indignant against the pope, and the viceroy of Naples menaced him with an invasion of his southern frontier, so that the Barberini finding more enemies than they expected gave up the Parmesan expedition and withdrew their army. The Duke of Parma relieved from this embarrassment entered the church territory at the head of three thousand horse, and, coming suddenly on the enemy, struck such a panic that the papal general fled to Bologna with but fifteen hundred men the rest having taken to flight without even seeing the enemy. Continuing his inroad to Forli unstained

by any outrage, a rare thing in those times, the Duke of Parma had no difficulty in supplying and recruiting his army, and would have pushed on to Rome but being restrained by Venice and Ferdinand was forced to desist, which he did with a bad grace, exclaiming that "The madman knows his own business better than the wise do the affairs of others." Most of his followers had in fact attended him from personal attachment, his popular name, and the hopes of booty, rather than from any expectation of regular pay, and as this could not last, it became necessary to recommence hostilities. Demanding a passage through Tuscany he entered it by Galeata and marched on Arezzo, intending to move forward and with Ferdinand's assistance recover Castro and even occupy Rome which was then in the utmost consternation; for the pope's enemies, and they were many, would all have joined his standard. Ferdinand's weakness, the lukewarmness of Venice, and that inveterate reciprocal suspicion which has ever marked the Italian character and argues general faithlessness, altogether prevented this enterprise and occasioned subsequent war, which might have been well avoided by a spirited seizure of the existing crisis.

Edward of Parma therefore went forward alone, took Città della Pieve, summoned Orvieto, and maintained his army in its neighbourhood; but seeing that no support was to be had from Tuscany, that one papal army was advancing on his left from Bologna, and another assembling near Rome under Cardinal Antonio Barberini in his front, he resolved to strengthen himself in Città della Pieve and Castiglione del Lago, and there expect a reënforcement of near five thousand men from Parma under his brother Don Francis. Rome was still in terror, and had Modena and Tuscany joined, the war would soon have ended; but Ferdinand fearful of his own state acted as might have been expected from a badly educated and naturally weak and irresolute prince, the pupil of bigoted women, and the captain of bravos. Time now became of most consequence to Urban,

and by the French ambassador's aid negotiations were opened at Castel Giorgio in the Orvieto territory, where Cardinal Spada arrived with full powers while Antonio Barberini was assembling six thousand men for the preservation of Castro. The Duke soon perceived that he would be sacrificed by priestly cunning acting on the indifference or timidity of his allies; he foresaw the pope's designs and his own difficulties; and when the treaty remained for Urban's ratification alone such obstacles were interposed as to manifest that pontiff's real intentions to the world. By reducing the Duke of Parma to winter in an enemy's country he gained time for preparations to oppose him in the spring with all the force of Rome, or else compel him to retire altogether: the latter course was adopted and he withdrew amidst the derision of the Barberini race and a tempest of priestly curses. *They* unblushingly accused him of obstructing the consummation of the treaty, while *he* vowed vengeance in the next campaign, when along with Modena he should again attack the papal territory. Urban's conduct showed the confederates how necessary it became to compel him by force of arms to observe treaties, and while he endeavoured to dissolve the League they were more determined in openly manifesting their resolution to continue it.

In the midst of this wild storm of human passions weakness and iniquity, the immortal Galileo passed quietly into an existence more congenial to his lofty nature; an existence where our greatest enjoyment will perhaps be a close and clear contemplation of the omniscient mind, a revelling in the brightness of inexhaustible knowledge, the delights of boundless intellect and immeasurable love! The spiritual being of Galileo had worn out the animal and might easily be supposed to have transmigrated into the infant Newton who on Christmas day of the same year first opened his eyes on that marvellous system which he was further destined to enlighten.

. Louis d' Este the Prince of Modena's brother and Giovam-

batista Gondi, who had become chief secretary on the death of Cioli, repaired to Venice to arrange the confederates' operations, but all real business was retarded by the state of Europe, until Urban's preparations on the Venetian frontier gave a fair occasion to commence hostilities. Richelieu died in 1642; Louis XIII. soon followed, and as Cardinal Mazzerino a devoted adherent of the Barberini and but little inferior to Richelieu, now ruled France, it was feared he might carry her arms further into Italy: besides this both Parma and Modena postponed the general objects of the League to private interests, which were at that moment their most powerful incentives. In May 1643 however a treaty was concluded between Tuscany, Venice and Modena (for the Duke of Parma on being refused the chief command reserved his independence) by which near twenty thousand men were to take the field in two divisions; one in Lombardy under Venice, the other in Tuscany under Ferdinand: both were to attack the church territory on the same day under the united standards of the League emblazoned with the confederates' arms and the motto "*Pro bono pacis.*" All their aid was promised to the Duke of Parma who was pressed to join them, and the publication of this confederacy was preceded by overt acts; for Venice had already commenced hostilities on the Po, and the Duke of Parma in the Ferrarese, where he took Bondena and Stellata, and by magazines and fortifications made them the basis of his future movements. The Duke of Modena joined the Venetian army, of which his division became the advanced guard, and entering the Ferrarese country acted in conjunction with Parma while the main body reduced the Polesine; after which all were to move forward into the heart of the ecclesiastical states. At the same time the Tuscan division under Prince Matthias of Medicis with the Grand Duke at their head marched from Florence to Montepulciano, and for nearly a century such a sight had not been seen in Tuscany. Eight regiments of Tuscan infantry

and one of Germans; sixteen squadrons of horse, four of which were Austrian cuirassiers; one regiment of dragoons, and fifty pieces of artillery formed this army. The ambassadors and nuncios retired on all sides from the respective courts, and Urban in a public manifesto complained that the children of the Church had conspired to tear their mother to pieces. War thus commenced.

The French ambassador Fontenay along with the Spanish cardinals Albornoz, Cueva, and others, tried hard but vainly to arrest hostilities, the pope's duplicity being always opposed by the confederates to any proposals of peace. Città della Pieve three miles from the frontier was first attacked and soon capitulated with a garrison of two thousand men, who were marched without arms to Orvieto: Castiglione del Lago a town strongly posted on the Perugian lake held out only four days under the Duke of Cornia, who finally put himself and possessions under the League's protection. The Marquis of Borro, who really directed all military movements, gained great credit for his rapid reduction of this place, which was on the point of being succoured by twelve thousand men within four miles of the town at the moment of occupation. The capture of Castiglione gave Ferdinand the command of the lake by means of a flotilla, besides the possession of many neighbouring strongholds, amongst them Passignano which opened the road to Perugia. Thus far all succeeded; but the necessity of garrisoning captured places diminished the army, and the Duke of Parma's independent movements paralysed every united operation of the League, drew an attack of the enemy on the Duke of Modena, and prevented reinforcements coming to the Florentines. Ferdinand however was not discouraged: he made fresh levies, ordered his galleys to blockade the papal coast, and two small affairs which took place, in one of which the Tuscans, in the other the Modenese were successful against the common enemy, gave fresh spirit

to the confederacy. Meanwhile the knights of Malta sent two galleys to the pontiff's aid, and the Tuscan priesthood thundered from the pulpits against their own sovereign and the war; the consequence of all this was a sequestration of Maltese property and the exile of every foreign priest with a similar sequestration. This showed some vigour, and Ferdinand's example was imitated by his allies; he followed it up by destroying the wall formerly built by the Church to push the river Chiana back on the Arno, his object being to direct a great mass of water against Rome which was already terror-struck by the unexpected success of the campaign. Pope Urban wept, and prayed for peace; his treasure was exhausted, new impositions fretted the people; but the Barberini pride was not yet humbled and peace no nearer than before. The foreign ministers again mediated, yet Ferdinand would listen to no proposals and pushed forward nearly to Città di Castello: meanwhile Don Mathias, who remained with a division of the army to watch Perugia, tired of an inactive blockade resolved if possible to fight the papal army, but hearing that a detachment of four thousand two hundred men were marching towards Tuscany he followed them to Castel San Giovino and after a severe conflict and the enemy's defeat with the loss of a thousand men he made the rest prisoners, besides four pieces of artillery. This victory enabled the army to advance within three miles of Perugia, which was more closely beleaguered by occupying a central position between that city, Todi, and Assisi, ravaging all the country, and destroying every flour-mill on the Tiber; Perugia therefore began to show symptoms of uneasiness, and all Cardinal Barberini's authority became necessary to curb the citizens. The perverseness of Parma and the inactivity of Venice paralysed every offensive movement of Modena and cramped the Tuscan army, while the enemy was not only enabled to draw reënforcements from Bologna and other places, but make an inroad with four thousand men over the mountain

of Pistoia and attempt that town by treachery. The assault was given but the inhabitants and militia, although surprised and hastily assembled, beat and drove them back to Bologna with the loss of three hundred men after having inflicted great injury on the country. Don Mathias hastened to Florence and reassured the people who had been somewhat fluttered by this sudden incursion, but after securing that frontier, found his movements so impeded by the Duke of Parma as to involve a concentration of all his field force round Perugia in order to maintain that position. The Barberini then made an attempt on Pitigliano to gain an entrance into the Senese country and transfer the seat of war to Tuscany, but the Florentines compelled them to raise the siege with the loss of two hundred men besides artillery and baggage. This victory by securing the Tuscan frontier would have allowed the siege of Perugia to be prosecuted with vigour had not the autumnal rains prevented it: whereupon the campaign finished, but the troops remained on the papal territory. Ferdinand who had increased his force to twenty thousand men saw the necessity of assistance and demanded it from Spain under the treaty of 1557; but Urban did the same as lord paramount of Naples: the Spanish cabinet acknowledged both, but conceiving that they cancelled each other complied with neither. Attempts at pacification were renewed to which an illness of Pope Urban at first imparted a character of sincerity which his recovery destroyed, and the League resolved on augmenting its forces to thirty-six thousand men.

Venice being a little roused by Tuscan successes, determined to bring the enemy to battle in the ensuing campaign as the only chance of forcing Urban to a peace: hostilities recommenced
A.D. 1644.

early in 1644 and the victory of *Lago Scuro* in the beginning of March gained her general, Valetta, some renown and brought matters nearer to a crisis. Peace was again treated for, and now with more sincerity on the part of Urban and his brood, because that pontiff's life was believed

to be of short duration; wherefore by the exertions of Cardinal Bichi a treaty was concluded at Venice on the last of March, to the great relief of an unhappy people, the sure sufferers and rare gainers in princely quarrels. But though Castro was recovered by Parma, no party actually profited by this war; things returned to their former state and all conquests were reciprocally abandoned. The belligerents were blamed for not making better conditions, but if victors adhere to the original object of war when they can almost dictate the conditions of peace; only let their cause be legitimate and they deserve praise not blame for their moderation*.

The terms of this treaty were scarcely fulfilled when after a reign of twenty-one years Pope Urban VIII. died, to the inexpressible joy of Italy and especially of Rome, which had been longing for deliverance from a man who had tormented the city with taxation and Italy with useless wars. The conclave was divided into the factions of France, Spain, and the more powerful Barberini: the Medici belonged to the second, and the first was feeble: Cardinal Carlo de' Medici as protector of Spain led that faction: the French could do nothing alone, and proposals were made by some patriot cardinals who had no personal hopes, that the spiritual and temporal functions should be divided between the pontiff and sacred college, which alone was to exercise the latter and utterly exclude nepotism! The mere idea of any measure with public good for its object is sufficient to astonish all readers of papal history at this epoch; but there were too many eager candidates, to allow of such a notion being entertained for a moment; and if Urban's long rule disgusted the many, it was because they suffered from the oppression without sharing the spoil.

Urban VIII. died on the twenty-ninth of July, and Cardinal Giovambatista Pamfili, a Roman of seventy-one years old, was elected in September under the name of Innocent X. He soon

* Muratori, *Annali*.—Galluzzi, *Lib. vii.*, cap. i., ii., and iii.

showed his partiality for Spain and the Medici and an utter dislike to France and the Barberini: Ferdinand's brother Giovanni Carlo was immediately advanced to the cardinalate, and his uncle Carlo gained considerable credit for managing this election, which not only secured a friendly pontiff but restored the Medician influence at Rome. The Barberini wished to unite themselves to Innocent X. by a family marriage, but Donna Olympia Maidalchini, his sister-in-law who ruled both him and Rome, had higher views; she looked to the future pontificate for her son and therefore made him a cardinal, while the mortified Barberini turned to Spain for shelter against the coming storm*. Yet their fears could scarcely have been great when, as the price of Spanish protection, they offered to maintain an army of five thousand men for one year in the Milanese, an offer only declined by Don Louis de Haro the Spanish prime minister, through apprehension of alienating Tuscany and forcing its sovereign into the arms of France. On the other hand Cardinal Mazzerino was disgusted by Innocent's declared partiality to Spain and Tuscany, but more particularly by the refusal of a cardinal's hat to his brother, all the odium of which fell on the Grand Duke. The latter was urged by Innocent to reconcile himself with the Barberini, but however disposed to please the pope and become friends with a powerful race as little scrupulous as himself in their modes of vengeance, such an act of weakness would have been wholly unsuitable both to the times and the character of a Medici. Ferdinand was therefore not so weak as to forego his expectations of future vengeance by premature reconciliation, and resolved to take his chance of the consequences.

Legal processes were instituted against the Barberini for public peculation which compelled them to claim
A.D. 1645. Mazzerino's aid who finally restored them to their country: this led to heart-burnings with Tuscany, and loud

* Vita di Donna Olimpia Maidalchini Pamfili, Principessa di San Martino (Ed. 1781.) By a cotemporary.

complaints about the part which Ferdinand had taken in the business to the prejudice of France, which he attempted unsuccessfully to excuse.

A French squadron destined as was announced to act against the papal and Tuscan galleys, obliged Ferdinand to assemble ten thousand men on the coast and put A.D. 1646. Leghorn and Porto Ferrajo into a state of defence; and Spain alarmed for her garrisons offered them either for sale or in pawn to him if he would only guarantee their protection: both offers were declined; the first because it would not save them from a siege, and the second, as being too open and dangerous an act against France. The French squadron sailed, but an ambassador had previously arrived to offer its assistance and the friendship of Louis XIV. if Ferdinand would only declare himself against Spain and consent to augment his dominions on the Genoese and Lombard frontier; or if he would even attempt the conquest of Sicily or Sardinia with French assistance; but if not, he was conjured to remain neuter and not bind himself by the treaty of Siena. The last proposition was agreeable to Ferdinand who had long been wincing under an obligation exacted so rigorously and returned so faithlessly; he therefore signed a convention of neutrality on the eleventh of May which granted the free use of Tuscan ports and a passage through those states to the fleet and armies of France. This was immediately notified to the Spanish cabinet which, angry as it was, could not in existing circumstances afford to show any displeasure at the risk of losing Tuscany altogether. The French squadron commenced operations by capturing the tower and port of San Stefano in the peninsula of Monte Argentario and besieging the neighbouring town of Orbitello, one of the *Presidj*, by sea and land* Grosseto became the head-quarters of the Tuscan army under

* It is a singular but undoubted fact that the "*Mal' Aria*" never enters within Orbitello, while all without is death! One man may sleep inside the land gate with confidence and impunity while his companion would meet with certain death only a few paces from him on the other side of the draw-

the Marchese del Borro, and Orbitello held out so stoutly as to allow the Viceroy of Naples to attack and disperse the French, at sea, while the marsh miasma assisted him with far more deadly effect on shore. Orbitello showing no disposition to parley, the siege was raised on the appearance of reënforcements from the south, and the French infantry embarked while their cavalry took the route through Tuscany to Spezia in the Genoese territory. This failure gave heart to Spain and embarrassed Ferdinand; but the preparations of France alarmed everybody and saved him from Spanish indignation. Innocent X. after attempting to rouse the Grand Duke from his neutrality, began himself to entertain a more friendly feeling towards France, and through the influence of Donna Olympia, who had been gained by the Barberini, he restored their possessions and employments and assigned Avignon for their residence. The Duke of Parma's death, the extreme weakness of Spain, the determined neutrality of Ferdinand, Donna Olimpia's conviction of the necessity of a friendly understanding with France in order to save her son-in-law's principality of Piombino, and the soothing influence of Barberini gold upon her politics; all combined to make Innocent X. treat that family so leniently, but to the great indignation of Rome. A subsequent marriage between Donna Olimpia's grand-daughter and a Barberini, with the promotion of another of these princes to the cardinalate, completed their triumph, so that the five nephews of Pope Urban ultimately recovered both riches and influence at the court of Innocent. This was Donna Olimpia's mode of making friends with the mammon of unrighteousness; for the pontiff was old, and expected soon to fail, and the Barberini's persecution showed her that she also might require protectors*.

While a congress which had assembled at Munster in West-

bridge! and yet to sight the town appears a dirty unhealthy hole, the country healthy and beautiful!

* Muratori, Anno 1646. — Galluzzi, Lib. vii., cap. iv. — Vita di Donna Olimpia, pp. 120-130.

phalia discussed the conditions of general peace, France was unrelaxing in active hostility, and Ferdinand would again have openly sided with that kingdom had not his fear of Spain, who already threatened Siena, prevented him : wherefore he was forced to content himself with sending an ambassador to the congress on his own account alone in the settlement of Italian affairs, who was if possible to disentangle him from the existing obligations incurred by Cosimo I. as vassal Duke of Siena.

Another squadron with a force of about eight thousand men under the command of Monsieur de Meilleraie and Du Plessis Praslin, alarmed both Spain and Tuscany ; the former was attacked at Piombino and Porto Lungone in Elba ; Piombino made but four days' fight, and Lungone fell after a month's siege : the squadron then departed, but disputes arose in Elba and Tuscany between the French garrisons and the Grand Duke's subjects, which occasioning remonstrances to the court of France it was soon discovered that they were expressly fomented to embroil Ferdinand with Spain by some overt act. Renewed offers were made to that effect and as resolutely declined, but the service of his brother Mathias was proposed and accepted as commander of the fleet then under the Prince of Conde's orders : Prince Mathias however excused himself on the plea of ignorance in maritime affairs, but really because he was too proud to serve under anybody. Although these negotiations were secret Philip's suspicions arose, and the sale of almost all the Tuscan galleys to France augmented them, notwithstanding that Ferdinand had previously offered these vessels both to Venice and the Viceroy of Naples. The latter also, in consequence of the troubled state of Sicily and Masaniello's exploits, demanded the usual succours and was refused ; this still further widened the breach while Ferdinand sighed for tranquillity ; because in a rigid and peaceful neutrality alone could he hope to reëstablish his finances and the national welfare.

The Tuscans were in fact still suffering from the late war

which they believed unnecessary; the Monte di Pietà was exhausted, the burdens heavy, and another famine threatening the country with disease and general want. The old magistracy of abundance had long been found inadequate to prevent scarcities, but ancient habit made the people confide in its efficacy more than in private enterprise which it paralysed, and Ferdinand although conscious of the fallacy was too timid to remove it. As an assistant means however he charged six of the chief merchants to provide the city with grain independent of the office of abundance, being well convinced of the superior efficiency and cheapness of private interest to public boards, and the event proved it.

A tax on paper and a reform of the Monte di Pietà, although only indirectly affecting the clergy, were denounced as new infringements of their rights, and the change in Pope Innocent X., who was gradually adopting the policy of Urban and the Barberini, equally encouraged their audacity in Tuscany and Parma, where the young Duke Rannuccio II. was similarly tormented. Everything was still in agitation, the tumults continued in Naples and Sicily, Modena had joined with France, and the Congress of Westphalia was now the only hope for Italian tranquillity: even this soon vanished, for though the treaties of Munster and Osnabruck pacified Germany, the war between France and Spain still raged and shook all Italy. Tuscany in particular felt this insecurity, because not being a fief of the empire it was omitted in the treaty, and the belligerent nations having shaken off Germany were likely to bring hostilities into that country. The death of Don Lorenzo de' Medici from poison given instead of medicine, cast a momentary gloom over the court, but in general there are few who can be so easily spared or who are more quickly forgotten than the scions of royalty, and yet few are placed in a situation to do more good if they be capable and willing to exert themselves. Don Lorenzo had shared in the spoils of Don Giovanni's widow and children, and was then disgracefully active,

otherwise he lived in comparative obscurity and soon was forgotten both by the prince and people*.

Don John of Austria natural son of Philip IV. having finally repressed Masaniello's insurrection, assembled a force at Messina to recapture Piombino and Lungone and demanded Ferdinand's contingent: the latter tried to avoid this, but seeing Don John resolute and no prospect of support from Mazzerino if he refused, for the latter had even been compelled to withdraw his forces from Catalonia, he took advantage of the time, turned short round and again made his peace with Spain. The circumstances of the moment and Don Louis de Haro's favourable disposition towards Tuscany enabled him to succeed in thus freeing himself from much anxiety and expense, and his commerce, such as it was, from the piracy of French cruisers who from Piombino and Lungone infested the coast and made little distinction between friend and foe. A second war, then imminent, about the duchy of Castro, made this reconciliation almost necessary to prevent the former extending to other parts of Italy: Innocent X. had adopted Urban's views about that fief, and creditors were convenient excuses for predetermined spoliation: they were put in possession of several places for the liquidation of their claims in despite of the Duke of Parma's offer to satisfy them under the guarantee of Spain; Innocent asserted that he was merely administering justice without any ulterior views; but the Bishop of Castro having been about this time assassinated with the connivance of Rannuccio, several towns instantly fell under the talons of the pontiff: reprisals were made on church revenues at Parma, all foreign ecclesiastics were banished, and an army of eight thousand men was in readiness to attack the pope's territory. Spain and Tuscany interfered, but Innocent at once attacked the city of Castro itself, and when Rannuccio marched to raise the siege and demanded a passage through Tuscany it was not only refused, but the refusal maintained by force because Ferdinand

* Discorso di Cosimo Baroncelli, MS.

did not consider that such provocation justified a war against the pontiff. The Duke of Parma was weak, he gave up the command to Gaufrido his favourite minister and the Bishop's murderer, who was subsequently defeated at Casale on his return from the expedition. By the advice of Ferdinand and the Duchess of Parma this man was immediately imprisoned and soon after lost his head, upon which was laid every sin committed against Rome. But all this humiliation failed, Innocent was too intent on his quarry; he took Castro, dispersed the inhabitants, destroyed the whole city, levelled the very ground where it stood, and erected a column on the desolate spot to record a pontiff's vengeance for a prelate's death! After this act of priestly beneficence a treaty was concluded which gave Innocent possession of the duchy as ecclesiastical property until every debt were discharged, and if not accomplished within eight years the tenure was to become permanent and Castro forfeited.

Ferdinand was justly blamed for allowing this, but he could
A.D. 1650. neither afford a war nor a quarrel with the pope, and his armed neutrality was a heavy burden which he felt doubly anxious to get rid of; besides he was now solely intent on strengthening his friendship with Philip, and the offer of Pontremoli by that monarch for 500,000 crowns enabled him to enlarge his dominions. This city, the capital of Lunigiana lies in the Val-di-Magne a plain watered by the *Magra* and the *Verde* rivers, and its territory extends from the Apennines to the river *Cravia* with about sixty miles of circumference. As its revenue did not exceed 3000 scudi, political motives and the hope of improvement would alone have justified such a price; but the country had been oppressed and exhausted, and this only could account for so small a revenue, as six thousand souls was then considered to be the civic population; and no less than seventy-nine villages with about sixteen thousand inhabitants were supposed to occupy the country! At present there are only about four thousand citizens and between nine and ten thou-

sand rural inhabitants, which as regards the city, is an increase of nearly a thousand in about ninety-five years ; that is from 1745 to 1840* : the ancient estimate is therefore probably exaggerated and is moreover out of proportion to so slender a revenue. Pontremoli during the Milanese government was one of those small states which, nominally under Spanish protection, soon became vassals, and commanding the communication between Lombardy and Tuscany it was jealously guarded, while the provincial chiefs were kept in a state of perpetual discord. In the subsequent state of Spanish affairs the maintenance of this post, isolated as it remained from the other Spanish provinces, was deemed too costly and useless, and therefore sold to the Genoese in 1647, but subject to certain conditions which were not fulfilled ; for the people insisted that King Philip had no right to sell them to a foreign state. The price to Ferdinand was nominally vast, yet really diminished one-fifth by his hopeless credits on the crown of Spain. This sale was strenuously opposed by Genoa, but the imperial investiture silenced her and placed the Grand Duke in possession, who in the fullness of joy offered all his assistance to Don Juan for the reduction of Piombino and Lungone, both of which after a month's siege surrendered and cleared the French altogether from Tuscany. On this occasion a present of a Florentine mosaic table worked with excellent skill and in exquisite taste was sent by Ferdinand to Don Louis de Haro : it illustrated stories from the poets, and in the centre was a golden equestrian statue of Philip IV. on a base of precious stones, by Gaspero Mola : the whole group was ornamented with pure gold, but the value of the workmanship far exceeded that of the materials. Don Louis de Haro honestly showed it to the king requesting his permission to receive so costly a favour, but Philip deeming it more suitable to a royal than a subject's cabinet, kept it for himself !

* Galluzzi, Lib. vii., cap. v.—Repetti Dizionario Geografico, &c., di Toscana.

The possession of Pontremoli opened a way to new acquisitions through the quarrels of feudal chiefs and the
 A.D. 1651. discontentment of their vassals, amongst whom Medician interference, like our own Indian protectorates, seems always to have been in favour of the worst cause. The son of a Marquis Fosdinuovo conspired to deprive his father of life and property, and Ferdinand supported him at Vienna while Genoa took the other part: both states were in fact endeavouring to take advantage of the universal discord in that province to benefit themselves, and much ill-blood arose between them which increased in proportion to the multiplication of conterminous points in their course of self-aggrandizement.

The paramount necessity of retrenchment and future economy,
 A.D. 1652. the love of science and literature imbibed from Galileo, and the general encouragement of talented men, began again to give a more intellectual tone to courtly habits and manners: a more simple and rational style of living spread from the palace downwards, without that gorgeous luxury which in excluding the many mortifies those whom fortune alone, not rank talent or manners, or any incapability of adding brilliancy to society, often denies the means of joining it. The interests
 A.D. 1653. of Tuscany moreover were with more favourable auspices again identified with Spain, which under the prudent and comparatively honest government of Don Louis de Haro was recovering from her former state of prostration: peace had been reëstablished in Catalonia; Barcelona was reduced to obedience; the Duke of Mantua had openly joined her, and in putting himself under Philip's protection even admitted a Spanish garrison to Casale. All these were so many signs of returning strength, and the decay of French influence in Italy infused a new feeling of security which softened manners by gradually melting down that reckless ferocity and absence of principle so often engendered through fear, weakness, and their attendant, suspicion.

Pope Innocent's advanced age generated the usual intrigues at Rome where through Donna Olympia's influence the Barberini were in the ascendant, so that it became expedient to send the Cardinal Carlo de' Medici, deacon of the sacred college and protecting Cardinal of Spain, charged with the full volume of Medician hatred to oppose their influence: he was also assisted by the young Cardinal of Medicis, and both acted under Ferdinand's orders as the depositary of Philip's most secret plans. The latter simultaneously endeavoured to quiet the uneasiness of France at this close alliance with Spain by certain attentions of state ceremony which the cardinals were commanded to pay to Cardinal Antonio Barberini and the French party at Rome: this elicited the particular thanks of Mazzerino and the queen, and induced them to overlook the Grand Duke's friendly reception of Cardinal Gondi Archbishop of Paris who had escaped from imprisonment on account of his share in the disturbance occasioned by the Parisian parliament against the Government. The death of Pope Innocent on the seventh of January 1655 concentrated all the previous intrigues in the Conclave, where the Barberini, supported by France, and the Spaniards, led on by Tuscany, were obstinately struggling. In the midst of this battle a third party was formed under the secret orders of Cardinal Francesco Barberini, who calling themselves the "*flying squadron*," took conscience and public good as their motto and determined to act independently. There were seventy-one cardinals, and forty-one of these were necessary to elect a pope, wherefore the "*squadron volante*," which mustered but thirty-three, was only able to exclude, unless it joined one of the others. The Spanish division could also exclude, and determined not to yield, while that of France declared its resolution to die in conclave sooner than abandon their candidate. Continued confinement however overcame the valour or patience of many, and after some manœuvring between the "*squadron volante*" and the Spa-

niards they came to a parley which terminated in the election of Fabio Chigi of Siena under the name of Alexander VII. Chigi was generally acceptable for his talents, experience, and conciliating disposition ; but his comparatively vigorous age made this election unpalatable to the older cardinals, and though the Medici who were principally instrumental in his election imagined that they had gained a staunch adherent they ultimately discovered that the private friend, under a change of station, is not always the public protector. Francis I. Duke of Modena who had married a Barberini, and whose eldest son was also allied by marriage with one of the Martinozzi, niece of Cardinal Mazzerino, became on this and other accounts suspected by the Marquis of Carazena governor of Milan, who requiring assurances of fidelity obliged him to demand French assistance, wherefore being also supported by Prince Thomas of Savoy he made active war on that city. Ferdinand apprehensive of seeing Parma drawn into this quarrel and attempting the recovery of Castro, endeavoured to get a prolongation of the time for payment, or the liberty of alienating a portion of that state to pay the debts. The young Cardinal of Medici was charged with this negotiation, but Alexander met him by a plump denial, asserting that Castro was much too convenient an acquisition for the church to permit its alienation, besides showing other marks of enmity, so that the cardinal prepared to retire in disgust when he was commanded to receive Queen Christina, daughter of Gustavus Adolphus, who had renounced a sceptre which she was too silly to wield and a religion too simple and perhaps too austere for her worldly propensities. The society of young prelates and Christina's attractions became so agreeable to all parties that Pope Alexander added a cardinal of maturer years to regulate these visits in order that neither profane nor sacred purple should be stained : as regarded the younger Medici this precaution seems to have been insufficient, for Ferdinand was soon after requested to recall his brother

to Florence for greater security. Young gay and agreeable prelates no doubt added much to the attractions of a religion which, amongst the cardinals at least, was then no impediment to fashionable immorality or any other mundane pleasure even though it might have been dashed with a little licentiousness*.

About this time the plague making its way from Naples passed along the coast towards Tuscany, but was there excluded by a prohibition of all correspondence with Rome, where the "*squadron volante*" still soared as a powerful independent body, but whose ascendancy Ferdinand was not inclined to suffer: after some ineffectual efforts to dissolve it he determined on a reconciliation with the whole race of Barberini, and by uniting them to Spain neutralize the hostility of that monarch, through their influence with Modena. This plan succeeded, and a restoration of their sequestered property by Philip IV. completed the pacification, which was not distasteful even to France, although it reinforced the Austrian faction at Rome.

Ferdinand and his brother, afterwards Cardinal Leopold, inherited much of the family taste for science and literature, and a careful education under the instruction and influence of Galileo improved and confirmed it: war plague and famine, with long and general misery had obstructed such pursuits; but when a reconciliation with Spain ensured national safety and calmed the sovereign's anxiety, fresh energy was imparted to philosophy by their example. Both Ferdinand and Leopold were not only encouragers of scientific men but were themselves well qualified to take part in philosophical labours and experiments, and quicken the advance of truth. Galileo had been overwhelmed by the inquisition while Ferdinand was yet a youth and still in a manner under female influence, but he now nourished the

* Galluzzi, Lib. vii., cap. vi.

seeds sown by that great man, and was instrumental in demolishing the scholastic philosophy in Tuscany to make room for that of his two illustrious cotemporaries Bacon and Galileo. Emulating the literary glory of old Cosimo and Lorenzo he established a Platonic academy as the first measured attack on the philosophy, the usurpation, and tyranny of the cloisters. Under this influence the great object of Florentine sages soon became a deduction of truth from the observation of facts, the dissolution of ancient bondage, and the total dissipation of error by the force of real experimental wisdom. The most efficacious means for this was a reciprocal and universal intercommunication of mind, and the consequent collision of opinions: thence numerous Florentine societies sprang up with varied objects and a diversity of appellations: literature, science, philosophy, the fine arts, all had their votaries, and every rank concurred in giving spirit and emulation to the scene. The example of the Della Crusca academy which combining pleasure with business often melted pedantry in conviviality, was followed by all the others, each having its "*Stravizzio*" or periodical banquet where temperate indulgence imparted zest to philosophy. Amongst these societies the "*Converzazione Filosofica*" of the Pitti palace was most celebrated: it consisted of the ablest literary and scientific men of the day, most of them the friends scholars and disciples of Galileo of whom Evangelista Torricelli occupied the first rank and filling the place of his great master almost rivalled his celebrity; but death carried him off in 1647 at the age of nine-and-thirty. This retarded the march of genuine philosophy; but every atmospheric change will still remind the world of Evangelista Torricelli da Modigliana. Famiano Michelini and Niccolo Aggiunti dal Borgo San Sepolcro, one of Galileo's most intimate friends, were the instructors of the Tuscan princes in mathematics and practical astronomy: Viviani, Marsili, Paulo and Candido del Buono, Antonio

Uliva and the celebrated physician poet and philosopher, Francesco Redi, all contributed to embellish the "Converzazione Filosofica" and lent a new grace to royalty while they benefited and illuminated the world. These scientific labours were however as yet only the separate exertions of individual men; but with Ferdinand's patronage and under Leopold's especial care the whole force of their genius was finally concentrated in the "*Accademia del Cimento*," which being the first experimental society became the model of all those that were subsequently formed in Europe. The taste for Italian literature which distinguished the Emperor Ferdinand the Third and his Empress Leonora had already caused them to assemble many learned Italians and form them into an academy in the imperial palace at Vienna, where the emperor's family, especially the Archduke Leopold William, always assisted; this gave rise to the "*Cimento*" in the palatial residence at Florence which opened six months after, and held its first sitting in June 1657 under the presidency of Prince Leopold de' Medici. As a pupil of Galileo, strongly inclined to science, corresponding with all the philosophers and professors of the fine arts in Europe, the brother and friend of his sovereign, and no mean proficient himself; Leopold was admirably adapted to preside over this new institution and direct its operations. Nor was he less fitted to preserve harmony in those societies, which not being exempt from human influence and weakness allow envy arrogance and jealousy, mortified vanity, and self-conceit to glide as easily amongst them as into courtly circles or the unphilosophical haunts of common men. It was the president's privilege to order experiments, but the academy was open to all talent, and its only fundamental law was the repudiation of any favourite system or sect of philosophy, and the obligation to investigate nature by the pure light of experimental facts and unerring truth.

This celebrated body had a short but energetic existence

of only nine years: Leopold from political expediency had become a cardinal, and a search for truth being then apparently out of keeping with that dignity, he was compelled to resign, whereupon the clashing pretensions of irascible genius burst forth and blew the assembly to atoms: its fragments still bright and precious were eagerly gathered up by foreign nations and made the corner stones of steadier institutions.

While Ferdinand and his brother were thus fostering science, the Grand Duchess Victoria and her favourite priests
A.D. 1658. were bringing up Prince Cosimo as a monk with all the bigotry and prostration of mind so often engendered in a cloister. He was now sixteen, but soon after his birth conjugal happiness, if any ever existed, was totally destroyed between his parents though appearances were still preserved, and the Grand Duchess was compensated by the management of her son's education. This separation continued for eighteen years when a reconciliation was effected and a second prince appeared in 1661. Young Cosimo thus educated in the gloom of priestcraft and bigotry, became melancholy, fond of solitude, of theological studies and sacred contemplations: philosophy and all her votaries were driven forth from his presence, and those best able to awaken in him some rational ideas and feelings of the use and duties of high station, were shunned as impious, while the narrow maxims of designing churchmen made an awful and profound impression on his youthful intellect. Averse from the occupations of science and genius, religious forms and ceremonies displaced truth, and constituted his principal recreation; a foe to cheerfulness, an enemy to music and poetry; sullen thoughtful and reserved, he courted retirement and sought his best consolation in the converse and society of friars. The Grand Duke, when too late, discovered his error in allowing of this education and endeavoured to counteract these melancholy habits by marriage: an English princess would have been preferred but for the unhappy predicament of the Stuarts, at that time

exiles on the continent, and the fear which then possessed every European state of offending Cromwell "at whose name the world grew pale." The treaty of the Pyrenees and marriage of Louis XIV. of France to a Spanish princess by destroying the Duke of Orleans' expectations of making his daughter queen; and his subsequent death, by leaving the children under regal protection, together facilitated the intentions of Cardinal Mazzerino and Ferdinand to marry the young princess to Cosimo in despite of the Duchess of Orleans. The Princess Margaret Louisa had been educated by Duke Gaston as the future queen of France: endowed with great liveliness and beauty she detested melancholy and gravity, whether in the stateliness of Spain or the good-humoured composure of Italy. Full of worldly accomplishments, fond of riding and hunting, fluent in language, brilliant in conversation, no human being could be less fitted for the character of her destined husband. The death of Mazzerino in March 1661 gave some hope of interrupting this match, but the king and queen were firm and the unhappy girl had her choice between Florence and a convent, so that without much apparent reluctance the marriage ceremony was accomplished by proxy. Don Mathias awaited her arrival at Marseilles and took her to Leghorn: the subsequent journey to Florence was a sort of triumph, in the midst of all that genius taste and wealth could perform to clothe reality in the brightest colours of enchantment. The whole scene was a brilliant pageant which flattered evanescent vanity, but Margaret's marriage was forced and her heart was far away! She joined Cosimo with disgust while her thoughts were fixed on the young Prince Charles of Lorraine.

The French ambassador Crecquy retired at this period to Siena and subsequently to Florence, for he had quarrelled with Pope Alexander, who was indignant that the treaty

A.D. 1659.

A.D. 1660.

A.D. 1661.

A.D. 1662.

of the Pyrenees should have been made without him, and still more so at the engagement of France and Spain to guarantee Parma and Modena against the church; the result was an immediate incameration of Castro with the destruction of all hope in its ultimate restoration. Crecquy assisted by an envoy sent by Louis XIV. endeavoured to restore the already interrupted harmony between Cosimo and his bride; but the blighted hopes and affections of Margaret cast a gloom over every thing and turned all that was meant for pleasure to poison: nothing could penetrate a preoccupied heart and every endeavour to please her was met by sullen discontent or biting ridicule. No overt act however occurred until after the departure of Prince Charles who had arrived and passed a considerable time at court where their affection was still unknown, but subsequently her proceeding became extravagant: concealing her pregnancy she took the most violent exercise on foot and horseback to procure miscarriage: detesting her husband, Florence, and everything Italian, she prayed to enter a French convent sooner than remain in Tuscany: the threats of Louis XIV. and the efforts of his ministers were equally unavailing, but both Cosimo and Ferdinand indulged her in everything; and thus they remained for some time longer.

The quarrel between France and Rome determined Louis XIV. to send an army across the Alps, and he demanded the use of Tuscany and its ports for his fleets and armies, at the same time inviting Ferdinand to join him and share the conquests. The requests were granted but the invitation declined, for the Grand Duke had now become too cautious a politician to be enticed into an imprudence by advantages so distant and uncertain, more especially as he was expecting a cardinal's hat for

A.D. 1663. one of his family to replace Giovanni Carlo de' Medici who expired of apoplexy in January 1663. Giovanni was considered a great loss because of his skill and talents in the

conduct of public affairs ; but from his open and unbridled licentiousness not well adapted to the purple. Alexander alike heedless of the menaces of Louis XIV. the remonstrances of Ferdinand, and the openly expressed anger of Italy, mustered twenty thousand men and prepared for resistance while he sent a minister to negotiate. Louis however would not admit this envoy to cross the border but conferences were opened at Pont de Beauvoisin with Crecquy : the restitution of Castro was however made indispensable, wherefore they failed and both sides prepared for war. Parma and Modena were eager to begin, a squadron lay ready in the French ports, and an army was all prepared to march : Louis however scarcely conceiving that Pope Alexander could be so fool-hardy as to oppose France, wrote to the old cardinal of Medici as deacon of the sacred college to say that after waiting eighteen months for redress he was about to cross the Alps, and as the peacefully inclined cardinals were likely to suffer innocently, they should now insist on it in full consistory, to which end he had despatched his plenipotentiary who would remain at Florence until the fifteenth of February. The time was short, the king peremptory, the college alarmed ; there was no evasion, and Alexander was finally compelled to negotiate. A congress accordingly met at Pisa under Ferdinand's mediation where the affairs of Parma and Modena were settled, the disincameration of Castro was agreed to, with the power of recovering that duchy at any time during the space of eight years, and compensation was awarded to Modena for the occupation of Comacchio. All these proved unsatisfactory to the Italian princes, who considered their interests sacrificed to the vanity of Louis XIV. ; but the humiliation of Alexander VII. was complete, and as severe as the insult to France was great and unprovoked. It arose in a dispute about ceremony between Crecquy and the pope's relations at Rome ; this led to affrays amongst their domestics and ended in an attack on the French embassy by the "*Sbirri*" and papal guard

who fired into the palace, and even at the ambassador himself while trying to allay the tumult: after this the carriage of the ambassadress was assaulted, a page was killed before her face, and the culprits allowed to escape with impunity! Crecquy thus divining the real source of tumult, withdrew from Rome, and thence arose the warlike attitude of France and subsequent negotiations. Finally Cardinal Chigi Alexander's nephew was sent to humble himself and his whole house before Louis in the following words. "If I and the family to which I belong had any part in the transactions of the twentieth of August 1662, we should esteem ourselves unworthy of the pardon that we now wish for and which it is our duty to demand from your majesty." Besides this, Don Mario Chigi was compelled to attest on the faith of a true knight that he had no part whatever in the transaction; and Don Agostino Chigi was forced to receive the Duke de Crecquy at the ecclesiastical frontier on his return to Rome. The grievances of those who had suffered from their attachment to France were redressed and compensated; the pope's Corsican guard was disbanded for ever and a pyramid erected in front of their guard-house on which was recorded the decree of abolition and the incapacity of that nation to serve the Holy See in time to come. After these conditions were executed, Avignon was to be restored and affairs to resume their wonted course.

The bloody conflict of nations to appease offended dignity cannot always be supported by morality; yet the satisfaction was great and universal at seeing this pontiff humbled by a power which he had presumed to insult in the same manner as the pontiffs were accustomed to trample on the weak Italian states. It is in fact the apprehension of disagreeable consequences which keeps governments and even many individuals in order; but as this wholesome fear is inefficient unless occasionally realized, it follows that wars on apparently trivial causes are sometimes necessary and therefore lose much of that barbarous and reck-

less character which at first sight they seem to deserve. There is in fact a certain line which neither countries nor private persons, however peaceable and gentle in character, can allow to be passed with impunity: for turning the other cheek to be smitten can only be effectual when your neighbour does the like; or when he who offers it is in error and he that smites immaculate.

The Duke de Crecquy on his way to Rome was again commissioned to attempt a reconciliation between Prince Cosimo and Margaret of Orleans who still persevered in her extravagant conduct: for Cosimo's studied absence was of no avail: all the ambassador's diplomacy, all the concessions of her husband, all the cunning of Ferdinand, and all the authority of Louis XIV. were alike insufficient to reduce one little wilful woman within the bounds of reason and lawful obedience! She had given birth to a son in 1663 and prospects brightened; yet to secure them, as was said, her French attendants were dismissed and her liberty restricted in order to make her feel the sovereign power and succumb to it! But a lofty extravagant spirit was not thus to be tamed, and more intense hatred ensued. She even demanded further liberty, a share in the government, emancipation from the Grand Duke's authority and from Cosimo's power, increased allowances, and the restitution of all her French attendants. Crecquy passed forward in despair to the less puzzling business of state, and the repeated autograph remonstrances of Louis XIV. were still
A.D. 1665.
useless: Madame du Deffant, who had educated her and was supposed to have some influence, arrived at Florence with three sets of instructions: the first all affection and gentleness; the second sharp and severe admonition; the third bitter reproof and threats of extreme rigour; all were equally scorned, and Madame du Deffant no longer recognized her former pupil! Religion, theology, bishops, priests, and friars were let loose upon the wayward girl, but they were all too like her

husband and only exasperated her the more : increased rigour became expedient and at the risk of public scandal solitary confinement was adopted. Poggio-a-Caiano was named as her place of residence and she received the intimation with delight, asserting that she should feel more comfort in being spared the sight of loathed and detested objects than any possible annoyance from local solitude or personal loneliness. In this retreat anger violence and perversity on one side were augmented by continual and mistaken efforts at reform on the other, her health began to suffer, yet on hearing of a proposed visit from the Grand Duke and Cosimo she promptly informed the latter that he would be received only by flinging a missal at his head ! Even pontifical authority was summoned to the rescue, but neither matrimonial, parental, royal, nor even papal influence were successful until solitude abstinence and confinement began to subdue mental perversity and occasion a parley. Her conditions were however unmodified in their audacity : nor was it until after a prolonged acquaintance with solitude and neglect, that either vanity or some more rational feeling wrought a momentary change of conduct : wherefore suddenly quitting her retreat she appeared at Florence and throwing herself into Cosimo's arms, while she acknowledged her errors to his father, submitted unconditionally to their authority and brought an ephemeral peace to the grand ducal palace !

The tranquillity enjoyed by Tuscany after its reconciliation with Spain had assisted the revival of commerce
 A.D. 1666. agriculture and manufactures, besides its beneficial influence on public finances and the fine arts ; the royal encouragement given to literature had also softened manners and social intercourse, but the preservation of this salutary quiet depended more on foreign policy than any personal exertions of Ferdinand. He had hitherto contrived by diplomatic cunning and double dealing, which in helpless states is perhaps the only means of safety, to steer between the enmity and no less

dangerous friendship of the two great transalpine monarchies, but at a vast sacrifice of treasure and sincerity; the first a serious loss both to himself and subjects; the last of little consequence in the estimation of either. Neither did the relative condition of European powers at this epoch exhibit any favourable symptoms of lasting peace. Philip the Fourth's decease left Spain exhausted by war, with all the evils of a minority, and a system of misrule, existing more or less since the days of Charles V. which all the virtue and ability of Don Louis de Haro were insufficient to remove. Louis XIV. too began to emit some sparks of that fire which subsequently set Europe in a blaze, desolated France, and sowed the seeds of those convulsions that ultimately destroyed her monarchy! By bringing nations to a truer estimate of their own force and dignity they gave a power to public opinion before unknown, and finally served to exhibit the weakness of those rulers who madly attempt to oppose instead of guiding the spirit of the age. England had already set an example which vibrated through every corner of the world, and even to the present day in a manner commands its destinies. Germany was about this period disturbed by Turkish aggressions which also pressed upon the eastern provinces of Venice; Pope Alexander VII. was striving to avoid fulfilling the treaty of Pisa by refusing the first payment for Castro, and the Emperor still insisting on contributions from the Italian fiefs, a recent demand which had remained dormant for centuries. The Grand Duke claimed exemption for Florence as an independent community; for Siena as a fief of Spain; and for his minor holdings on the plea of poverty; but as a voluntary act he sent a supply of arms and stores to Trieste, which a subsequent peace soon spared him the necessity of repeating.

The Cardinal of Medici's death made that dignity more than ever desirable for another Tuscan prince: Mathias wanted it; but Leopold's superior talents marked him as the fitter man;

wherefore Ferdinand resolved to wait until the approaching decease of the former should leave him free to act, and in the interim strove to procure the benefices previously enjoyed by both cardinals for his second son Francis Maria. Alexander VII. died in May 1667 and his successor Pope Clement IX. showed a friendly disposition towards Ferdinand by offering a cardinal's hat to either of his brothers, which the death of Mathias now left him free to accept for Leopold. It was imagined by some that this favour was a mere artifice of Clement's to dissolve the *Cimento*; but his character forbids such belief, and long before Leopold's promotion that academy began to crumble away from causes already noticed. Borelli and Viviani quarrelled, and the former left Tuscany with Oliva and Rinaldini: Dati and Viviani were much noticed by Louis XIV. and others with more vanity and less merit became jealous of this distinction. Segni and Magalotti left court to make the tour of Europe, and Leopold himself, occupied in state affairs, ceased to attend as before, so that the whole society gradually mouldered away. In Rome however he still continued his patronage to learned men and even protected some of Galileo's followers from the inquisition: amongst these Onorato Fabri a Jesuit had boldly overstepped the intolerance of his order and hailed the light of reason; whereupon he was marked as a victim by the inquisitor, but Leopold's influence saved him.

After a few months of quietude the Princess of Tuscany alarmed both courtly morality and dignity by attempting to elope with a Frenchman of low birth and bad character; and consequent rigour only induced her to meditate joining a party of Gipsies with whom she was one night detected settling all the preliminaries from the palace windows at Pisa! Baffled in this she again strove to produce miscarriage, and failing, resorted to starvation as a means of suicide! But the reduction of her physical system by this regimen tended to subdue her excitability and she finally gave birth to the Princess Anna

Maria Louisa afterwards electress Palatine. In consequence of her fixed aversion to Prince Cosimo he was advised to absent himself for a season, and visited Holland and Germany, returned to Florence and was again rejected, then travelled through Spain and Portugal, embarked at Corunna for England, was driven by a storm into Kinsale, and as already remarked, though fresh from Tuscany in one of its most miserable epochs and from the still more suffering Spain, he was nevertheless astounded at Irish wretchedness! Continuing his course to London and thence through France homeward, he found the princess somewhat more placable, and hoping for greater tranquillity applied himself to public affairs.

A.D. 1668.

A.D. 1669.

The death of Clement IX. in December 1669 gave him and the Cardinal of Medicis full scope for their intrigues in managing the conclave, which after more than four months of perplexity, at length, and principally through Medician influence, elected the octogenarian Cardinal Altieri, as a provisional pontiff whose exaltation would release them for a season from confinement, and on the twenty-ninth of April 1670 he ascended the throne under the name of Clement X.

About this period the Grand Duke Ferdinand's health began sensibly to decline until a confirmed dropsy ending in apoplexy terminated his existence on the twenty-fourth of May 1670 after a reign of forty-nine years out of fifty-nine which he passed in the world. Of a feeble temperament, and educated under the influence of vain silly women and weak self-interested ministers, the earlier years of this reign were a reflex of their despicable and mischievous character. Timidity in opposing ecclesiastical encroachments coupled with extreme terror of papal authority, marked the incipient acts of his government: Galileo's persecution although deplored was scarcely resisted by him, and together with the trained assassins of his ordinary suite exhibit a mixture of fear superstition and ferocity that can

A.D. 1670.

scarcely be excused even by the manners of the age, by papal power, or the alleged necessity of opposing the Barberini with their own treacherous weapons. Ferdinand the Second's rule was nevertheless marked by considerable prudence, though often verging on timidity; by an apparent wish to alleviate public misery, and by more enlightened views than the mass of his people on the means of doing so. He displayed all the rigour of his race in upholding the severity, or rather the vindictive spirit of old republican legislation; for vengeance and not example was still the moving principle of government, and the greatest personal suffering with the least exemplary warning formed the most prevailing habit of that age and country.

His taxation was heavy and the people complained, but they were not exasperated by courtly extravagance when crying in bitterness for bread. Social, nay even familiar with his courtiers, and surrounded by men of science, he knew how to conceal sovereignty under the garb of a polished and enlightened gentleman. A strong fraternal affection which allowed his brothers considerable share in the government was as liberal as unusual amongst crowned heads, and almost unique in the race of Medici: besides this a long peace and the naturally scientific bent of Ferdinand's mind ultimately modified its early ferocity, and the old republican spirit being spent, what was lost with rough independence, was in the opinion of many more than compensated by a soft and refined civilization, the harbinger of bigotry and hypocrisy in the reign of his successor. The very forms and vestiges of republican freedom were nearly obliterated under Ferdinand II., one of whose greatest faults was extreme severity, not only as the effect of inclination or a morbid sense of nominal justice, but in allowing the Inquisition's acts a free course throughout Tuscany, nay even under his own eyes in the capital. His private vices were the theme of Florentine scandal and public execration, and his separation from the Grand Duchess is said to have been the consequence of them; yet the

tales of his debauchery are stoutly denied by others, and Florentines seldom omit any occasion of casting a deeper tinge on the faults of their adversaries.

Ferdinand the Second's plan of associating his brothers in the government gave considerable force and unity to its decisions; it reduced the various secretaries of state to simple executors of his will, and the sovereignty itself to a species of patriarchal government which the perfect fraternal agreement made more efficient. Prince Mathias as Governor of Siena was usually absent from Florence, and in addition had the general military command; but the Cardinal Giovanni Carlo and Prince Leopold, presided in the councils, managed all financial and political business at home, and were commonly chosen as arbitrators in private disputes or litigation. This sort of rule gained popularity, probably because it was not ill or ignorantly administered, but the succeeding reign enhanced its value and it endeared its memory.

That deterioration of manners which sprang from weak female government and papal disputes was arrested, and finally ceased after the establishment of peace under the more manly rule of Ferdinand; the national character assumed a milder and more affable form, crime diminished in towns, but the rural districts were still infested by robbers and assassins, the scum of Lombard wars and Neapolitan revolutions. Still more pernicious than these was the corrosive action of priestly influence and its direct encroachments on state government: arrogated privileges and immunities afforded continual pretexts for disputing the sovereign power and avoiding public burdens; the bishops, careless of their pastoral duties became mere tools of Rome, and under the Barberini made strenuous efforts to sap the prince's authority and dispute the judgments of his courts. The government was essentially weak irresolute and sensitive; the spiritual and temporal power of Rome were immoderately feared, and the domineering spirit of priestcraft rode triumphant over

a timid prince and superstitious people. An augmented tax on stamped paper in 1645 was made a cause of quarrel although the clergy were expressly exempted, and its abolition most insolently demanded on the plea that ecclesiastics would be occasionally though indirectly affected by it. Such abuses were rife and rank during the reign of Ferdinand II., nor had ancient republican customs nor the regulations of Cosimo or Francesco I. any power to stop them, so that the government became more priestly than monarchical, and clerical tribunals still lorded it over Tuscany. Amongst these the Inquisition held the most high and dreaded place.

Under Pope Urban VIII. and directed by Barberini-hatred, that court assumed complete independence and indulged in all the horrors of its character: confiscations, pains, penalties and the dismal pomp of the *Auto da fè* accustomed the people to its terrors and especially to these spectacles, by insensibly awakening a gloomy and fearful interest in them which Ferdinand never attempted to destroy. The canon Pandolfo Ricasoli, a man of great learning and apparent respectability, had gained some celebrity by his spiritual direction of convents, also as a preacher and in the instruction of youth; amongst other things he directed a school of young girls founded by one Faustina Mainardi a woman of low condition: they apparently confined themselves to pure spiritual instruction but employed religious confidence as a means of seduction, and to such an extent as to demoralize the whole society. This conduct as reported by a father confessor soon put the Holy Office into action, and in November 1641 the refectory of Santa Croce was turned into a court of justice to try the culprits. A scaffold hung with black drapery, as for the exposure of a corpse, and surrounded by the inquisitors, was seen in the midst of this vast hall: Cardinal Giovan-Carlo de' Medici, the younger princes of the blood, the priesthood, the nobility, every member of government, and other official persons filled the remaining space, so that the area of

that enormous chamber teemed with anxious spectators. On this gloomy stage the prisoners dressed in garments painted with flames and devils, were seen kneeling at the feet of the Grand Inquisitor, who grim as Moloch, hearkened to a monk that with sepulchral voice and menacing aspect recited the process, accompanied by minute details of every obscene act which had been committed and acknowledged by the prisoners. Sentence was then pronounced, by which Faustina and Ricasoli were doomed to be walled up in a dungeon until they expired ! The other accomplices were in a like spirit condemned to punishments then considered proportionate to their crime : yet the Inquisitor was reprimanded for his lenity, dismissed from office, and replaced by a priest of sterner mould ! And Ferdinand, although individually averse, permitted such horrors even in the time and country of Torricelli and Galileo ; so dark and bright are the different phases of the human mind !

Father Marius of Montepulciano who revealed these wicked scenes was blamed for his officiousness, especially by Ferdinand ; but terrible as was the punishment Father Marius would have been unjustifiable in concealing such crimes even from more unrelenting judges ; yet the universal odium that he thus incurred caused his removal to Rome, whence he was soon sent back by the Inquisition, not in his former office of confessor to the schools of piety, but as chief of that establishment in Tuscany. Thus supported by the pope he became so troublesome to government that Ferdinand roused to a sense of his own dignity at last expelled him altogether, yet without abating the evil, which continued until peace was made with the Barberini. Papal ambition and the unrelaxing malignancy of that powerful family multiplied these vexations by augmenting the priesthood ; new monastic orders were introduced, new convents of Jesuits established ; Rome exulted in beholding the rapid increase of her instruments and in seeing princes so tamely submitting to her yoke ! Convents waxed rich, powerful, and luxurious ; ecclesias-

tical immunities became more numerous and tempting; taxation more grinding; the land full of wretchedness; fresh burdens crushing the means of existence on one side and producing luxury and privileged brutality on the other; those means still diminishing; the youth pressing onward in multitudes to the enjoyment of cloistered idleness and immunity; discontented at home, averse to arms, distrustful of commerce, oppressed by taxation; what little freedom they enjoyed was willingly bartered for the influence and repose of a convent, and numbers flocked to an order which they saw was so clearly undermining sovereign authority and casting off all control but that of Rome. Power and opulence soon destroyed monastic discipline, morality withered, confusion echoed from every cloister, and the sovereign's authority was completely paralysed: new religious orders were then introduced in the same pious disguise of poverty, morality, humility; and having first captivated the people, became in their turn, rich immoral and licentious: swarm after swarm thus settled on the land and entirely exhausted the commonwealth.

The augmentation of old, and imposition of new taxes, disgusted everybody; that on salt was peculiarly severe and oppressive; trade and manufactures, which needed especial support in their declining state, suffered in common from these heavy contributions, the results of war, loans, plague, pestilence, and famine. The wool trade, once the great source of national wealth, was in all its branches reduced to nearly a cipher and its spirit fled to more congenial climes; France England and Holland welcomed her; commerce tired of the narrow confines of the Mediterranean had long broken those bounds, and swarming over the wide Atlantic and Indian seas flew home with its treasures to the shores of Europe. Trade and manufactures supported Florence while Italy was the focus of European industry, but ages rolled away, circumstances altered. light and heat were more widely spread, and quickened distant

nations ; new tastes sprung up, new wants arose amongst less civilized men ; their ingenuity awakened ; arts shifted their abode ; first by short flights like new-fledged birds ; and finally on stronger pinions to remoter coverts, leaving the ancient nest unpeopled. Such is ever the course of nations exclusively depending on commercial and manufacturing industry unsteadied by the ballast of agricultural strength : trade is a hoop which runs well while the impetus continues, but cannot long maintain its own self-balanced motion.

The industry that supported Florentine commerce had decayed, but the silk and wool trades were still eagerly, though unskilfully cherished, in consequence of the numbers depending on them, and having been long artificially sustained, when once the props gave way their fall became too rapid for the manufacturing population to find other occupations in a generally declining country. It was vainly imagined that those protective laws, the supposed causes of their prosperity when Spain and England were as yet unable to profit by their own wool, would still work miracles when all Italy teemed with the various products of transalpine industry. By continuing the restrictive or protecting system of the Florentine republic, foreign cloth was shut out, and severe laws were revived to regulate the sale and manufacture of native drapery, while the mischievous distinctions between the capital and its surrounding districts, as far they affected the quality of wool for manufactures, were again enforced in 1659. It was a maxim of both prince and people that the citizen was more useful than the farmer, and the latter was long neglected : industry therefore became fettered in the country, but fostered and as it were overlaid with kindness in the capital. In 1662 the impolicy of such measures was perceived, yet having no vent for its surplus the pampered manufacture still declined after being thus forced into unnatural existence, like artificial incubation, which about the same epoch was introduced into Tuscany.

The silk manufacture followed a similar course and languished in defiance of its excellence ; nor had the cultivation of mulberry trees fulfilled public expectation. In 1610 the quantity of foreign raw silk used in Florentine looms amounted to three-fourths, and in 1650 to one-third ; but still the manufacture declined generally, and numbers of workmen were wholly supported by the state. After the last epoch this branch of industry received a sudden impulse by demands from England, and apparently not only for the article but the manufacturer. A law was passed to prevent weavers carrying their art out of Tuscany on pain of death and outlawry, by virtue of which decree anybody might kill them with impunity ! But the evil of restrictive laws was soon proved by their effects on foreign nations ; amongst others, England met the Tuscan prohibition of British manufactures by retaliation against the silk trade when its state was most promising. Agriculture did little to supply the void, for that also became gradually so manacled as to advance with extreme difficulty : the old laws which had already ruined Siena were yet in force, and still diminished the population : a succession of state visits in the form of commissions to inquire into what might be remedied in that province only verified fact without discovering causes. In 1640 Siena contained about sixteen thousand souls and the rest of the province only ninety-six thousand, a sad decline from republican prosperity, when previous to the great plague in 1348 the city alone is supposed to have numbered a hundred thousand inhabitants !

The fear of inflaming so sensitive and high-spirited a people, coupled with the character of Medician rule, which acted entirely through the Senese nobles, formed a government almost exclusively aristocratic and therefore ill adapted to recover a sinking state ; it was like soothing one finger of a universally diseased body, and brought no general relief. The ancient republican territory was now divided amongst four hundred and

twenty noble families who enjoyed a rental of two hundred and seventy thousand crowns; to these, amongst whom private advantage commonly lurked under the mantle of patriotism, did the government look for ameliorative counsel; and as they derived all their possessions from the prince his maxim of making Siena the mere hand-maiden of Florence was zealously supported, for each drew more individual advantage by so acting than he ever could contemplate from any generally beneficial regulations. The prohibition against exporting grain was rigidly enforced, except under conditions that cancelled themselves, and its price in the Florentine market was fixed by government; but all this while the public revenues were badly administered or made subservient to private gain: these were all valid reasons for a decay which was exclusively attributed to the insalubrity of climate. To remedy this, Ferdinand II. notwithstanding his father's and grandfather's failures ordered a canal to be excavated between Grosseto and Castiglione della Pescaia with the double purpose of facilitating the transport of grain to the coast and draining that portion of the marsh; and while this remained open and the river Ombrone restrained within certain bounds, all that could possibly be done for health and commerce was supposed to be accomplished. Even this was attended with enormous cost and trifling benefit, and as the interest of those who hired the fisheries on the lake itself was always consulted before the public good, its swampy area became injuriously expanded with a proportionate extension of miasmata. In 1639 the engineers Bartolotti, Cantagallina, Gargioli and Pietro Petruccino asserted, and truly, that the only effectual cure would be by introducing the muddy waters of the Ombrone into the centre of the swamp, which by depositing their silt would gradually raise the soil sufficient for cultivation, but they were alarmed at the distance of that river and the expense necessary to effect their object; yet this has since been accomplished with the

most satisfactory results, as we shall see hereafter, yet requiring time for complete development. Don Benedetto Castelli was sent to report on what might be effected in 1641 but without any real benefit, and in 1646 the canal had suffered such injury as to be quite unfit for navigation.

Agriculture did not flourish under such auspices, for the comparatively prosperous condition of Tuscany during Ferdinand's latter years proceeded more from the elasticity occasioned by continued peace than from the wisdom or exertions of government. In the midst of all this national decay, Leghorn still continued to advance in wealth and population until it became the focus of Mediterranean commerce; English French and Dutch settlers had been long established there in permanent masses, and the florid aspect which that city and its neighbourhood presented was often taken by strangers as a sample of the general state of Tuscany, thus raising Ferdinand's reputation to an unmerited height. Nevertheless he tried hard to revive commerce and even made a treaty with the Czar of Muscovy whose ambassadors twice visited Florence; once on their way to Venice in 1656, and again in 1660, at which time the Grand Duke obtained permission to trade directly with Archangel, Moscow, and generally throughout the Russian dominions. The attempt which had so often failed with Turkey was renewed by Ferdinand II. and a traffic, commenced through the means of Austria, came to be considered as the great support of Florentine silk and wool trades: this was accomplished in 1664 at the peace between the empire and Turkey when Ferdinand was included as an ally of the former, and under Austrian colours the Tuscans traded securely, while their galleys continued in hostility. Turkish honesty could ill comprehend this double character of friend and foe, yet in 1668 after many difficulties the Tuscans, under imperial passports and colours, were allowed to trade in the Turkish dominions by

paying three per cent. on all sales, and two per cent. to the imperial treasury. This imparted some little energy to whatever of Florentine enterprise remained, and might have led to better things had not the Grand Duke's death arrested it along with every other commercial project of his reign.

COTEMPORARY MONARCHS.—England: Charles I. to 1649; then Cromwell until September 1658; then Richard Cromwell to April 1659; then Charles II.—France: Louis XIII. until 1642; then Louis XIV.—Spain, Naples and Sicily: Philip IV. to 1665; then Charles II. until 1700.—Portugal recovers her liberty: John of Braganza, 1640; Alphonso VI., 1656; Peter II., 1668; Frederic William the Great, Elector of Brandenburg.—Popes: Urban VIII. to 1644; Innocent X. to 1655; Alexander VII. to 1667; Clement IX. to 1670; then Clement X.—Emperors: Ferdinand III. to 1658; Leopold I.—Sweden: Christina to 1654; Charles X. to 1660; then Charles XI.—Poland: John II.

CHAPTER XI.

FROM A.D. 1670 TO A.D. 1723.



COSIMO THE THIRD,

GRAND DUKE OF TUSCANY.

COSIMO the Third at twenty-five years old ascended the throne amidst the hopes and fears of Tuscany: it was believed that he would imitate Ferdinand, and public tranquillity
A.D. 1670. afforded him a fair field of action which was not immediately neglected; his respect for Leopold also caused a degree of wisdom and moderation in the early government which was not afterwards sustained. Travel had produced its usual effect on a slender intellect, and instead of unfolding the mind and subduing prejudice filled him with a silly contempt for his native country which even had it been merited was unwise for a sovereign to express. An augmented portion of vanity and ostentation therefore was all that Cosimo III. had acquired by travel, and they were almost immediately displayed: a costly funeral for the deceased prince was his first and perhaps most excusable extravagance, although such posthumous honours flatter the living more than the dead, and some of his predecessors had strictly limited these expenses from a rational opinion of their inutility, and almost mockery of real grief. Courtly splendour suited the taste of Margaret Louisa which coupled with the existence of one son and the expectation of another, besides the internal and external prosperity of the Medici family, induced a general hope that conjugal dissension might cease. Cosimo's brother Francis-Maria was destined to succeed Leopold at the papal court: the European powers with jarring interests were as yet at peace; but

the weakness of Spain had induced Modena and Parma to ally themselves exclusively with France: the treaty of Pisa as regarded Castro remained still unfulfilled; and Louis XIV. was absorbed in vaster projects destined to force all Europe into war. England Holland and Austria became alarmed and regarded him with jealousy, but weaker and smaller states were still left in repose. Tuscany therefore, except a silly squabble with Savoy, was at peace, but Cosimo particularly A.D. 1671. courted the Emperor, as well to thwart that Duke's pretensions to the title of *Highness* which he claimed as King of Cyprus, as to assist him in extending his own dominions. For this he occupied Fosdinuovo in Lunigiana whose chief had been killed, then attempted to purchase Piombino from the Ludovisi family, afterwards to acquire the *Presidj* in lieu of the Spanish debt. All these failed yet were not entirely abandoned, but a second son born in 1671, and called Giovanni Gastone after his maternal grandfather, was some compensation by securing the succession, though destined to terminate the race of Medici. The Grand Duchess now became ambitious and demanded a share in the government; this being refused she feigned illness and insisted on returning to France, but finally asked permission A.D. 1672. to perform an act of devotion at Prato, and afterwards dine at Poggio-a-Caiano. There she expressed her determination to abide until Louis XIV.'s pleasure were known, and insisted on Cosimo's consent to a final separation, with permission for her to retire into a French convent. On this the Bishop of A.D. 1673. Marseilles and Madame du Deffans were sent to Florence, but she again proved too much for both duenna and priest, changed her tactics for deep religious zeal, and declared that a celestial inspiration compelled her to pass the rest of her A.D. 1674. days in sacred duties, which if prevented, Cosimo would be responsible for her soul and bring eternal damnation on both. This stratagem succeeded, for his temper and affection being exhausted Cosimo saw the advantage a refusal would give her

in public opinion, therefore consented to her residence in the convent of Montmartre near Paris under the superintendence of its rigid Lady Abbess the haughty Duchess of Guise. Her departure was regretted at Florence where beauty liveliness and generosity conspired to make her popular, and the real causes of discord having been carefully hidden she succeeded in establishing a notion of her being the innocent victim of Cosimo's hate: to this belief his gloomy temper gave greater currency, for being a stranger to social intercourse public feeling was prepared to take that aspect which Margaret so ingeniously designed, and her forced marriage strengthened every feature. At Montmartre she was immediately visited by Louis and all the royal princes, and soon gained such an ascend-
A.D. 1675. ant that her actions were left free while Cosimo's complaints were ridiculed: his rage became unbounded at finding himself thus duped by Margaret, derided by the French court, blamed by his own subjects, and universally condemned! A naturally odious disposition now became more salient and a soured temper was exasperated into cruelty: this was augmented after Leopold's death which like that of almost all his family was accelerated by early intemperance; the cardinal had already retired from public life, and his decease in November 1675 was regretted by European science in general while it formed the declining point for that of Tuscany in particular. Although hating philosophy, Cosimo affected to be the philosopher and patron of scientific men, some of which were ostentatiously retained at court, respected by all but the sovereign: his magnificence and luxury surpassed every former prince, and both men and things were imported from each quarter of the globe to increase his courtly splendour: apparently generous to strangers but proud and penurious to his subjects, vanity became his idol, and on its altar the substance of Tuscany was sacrificed: besides which taxes again multiplied, and all so rigorously levied that the nation writhed and withered under him.

As it was always Italy's fate to obey the strongest, every undecided struggle amongst transalpine nations tended to her tranquillity, and their collision in the Mediterranean drove more trade to Leghorn. Rome was fast losing political importance and becoming a mere stage for silly contentions about ceremony and royal precedence: the death of Clement X. gave a new vent to faction which was stopped for the moment by Cardinal Odiscalchi's election under the name of Innocent XI. and his conduct happily did not belie the expectations that were formed of him. A.D. 1676.

A general peace now became necessary; France wanted to secure her conquests; Spain to check the ambition of Louis; other states were tired of war, and the treaty of Nimeguin gave quiet to Europe for a season. A.D. 1677. Cosimo, urged by vanity and ambition, wished to be considered as a contracting party; he had designs on Lorraine, where after the death of Duke Charles IV. the only male heir was Prince Charles son of Francis II. then a fugitive serving under Montecucculi in the imperial army. This prince was expatriated because he would not consent to the treaty between Charles IV. and France, and thus surrender his ancestral rights to Louis XIV. He had married the emperor's widowed sister Eleonora Queen of Poland whose age and former sterility destroyed all expectation of children, so that the settlement of Lorraine became an object of European statesmen. In this Austria opposed France, and two conflicting opinions arose about the existence or non-existence of the salique law in that duchy: in the former case the Duke d'Elbeuff could claim; in the latter Prince Ferdinand of Tuscany by his descent from Margaret of Lorraine sister of Charles IV, and therefore, after the existing duke, the nearest descendant. The possession of that country by France would have enabled her to cut off all direct communication between Flanders and Milan, because it united Burgundy with the former and the imperial hereditary dominions, so that

France would no longer have been obliged, as formerly, to protect the frontier by a chain of fortresses when the dukes of Lorraine were inimical. Austria therefore, without committing Cosimo, offered to broach this subject at the congress of Nimeguin and if possible secure the female succession; but as Tuscany could not hold Lorraine against France, a proposal was made to exchange it for Elba, Sardinia, and the Tuscan garrisons. The Grand Duke was pleased with these terms, which were sanctioned by Charles of Lorraine himself, and drew the two princes into closer connection, and it was hoped that if this project were vigorously seconded by Cosimo at the congress, an advantage might be gained; but this prince's timidity ruined it, so fearful was he of disobliging Louis and the court of France.

Obsequiousness to monarchs, a lavish bribery of their ministers; pride, vanity, and silly ostentation, were Cosimo's means and motives of action; and being more of a confessor than a sovereign he studied consciences rather than talent and duty, and compelled many to feign a devotion which they inwardly despised. The places of Ferdinand's old ministers were now filled by creatures of the Grand Duchess Vittoria; men without capacity spirit or energy, and so timid that the poet and naturalist Lorenzo Magalotti* one of the greatest statesmen of the day, compared them to little children frightened with the threat of being sent back to school†. Spanish weakness, French influence, and the growing power of Austria combined to offer a favourable occasion for Tuscan aggrandizement, especially as two of these powers were favourable and the third not much averse; but a timid neutrality together with Cosimo's fawning conduct towards every foreign monarch prevented success and drew universal contempt on a government whose feeble bigoted character was gradually imprinting itself on the people, and so deeply as almost to be

* Count Lorenzo Magalotti, author of "*Canzonette Anacreontiche*," published under his Arcadian name "*Lindoro Elateo*," besides many other

poetical and philosophical works. He was born in 1637 and died in 1712.
† Galluzzi, Lib. viii., cap. ii°.

legible (as far as such impressions can) even in the present day. "Our greatest evil," says Magalotti, "is the opinion which we have managed to impress on the world that nothing but fair words and formal declarations of obsequiousness and respect towards everybody is to be expected from us; without ever unning the risk of committing ourselves however slightly for any human being! Hence the little estimation in which we are held; for it is not to be expected that people will spend their means and talents to serve a family which has manifestly established the maxim of always playing a timid game, and which would rather perish in the universal ruin, if circumstances required it, than endeavour to save itself by taking a bold decided part" *.

Every department of state was soon filled from the cloisters, and theology became a substitute for statesmanship: the fruits of his mother's conventual education and weak character, nourished the child, enfeebled the man, and emasculated the nation: finances were no longer regulated by public means and industry, but by the cunning of priests, whose conduct was marked by that encroaching spirit self-interest and paralysing influence, more or less inherent in this order of every persuasion and in every country, when once allowed to aspire above, or rather *beyond* the legitimate duties of its calling. Quick in the perception of Cosimo's character the monks of Borgo San Sepolcro began to assail the tax on corn-grinding, not as a public grievance but as it affected themselves, and after six years' contention Cosimo was forced to sue for peace, which as an especial favour was tardily accorded. The able men about court, probably aided by a natural family taste, worked on his vanity to promote the fine arts: his health also assisted, because intemperance occasioned repeated illness, and his physician the celebrated poet and philosopher Redi, ordered constant walking exercise: Paulo Falconieri one of Ferdinand's scientific

* Galluzzi, Lib. viii., cap. ii°.

companions advised him to take this in the National Gallery, and for greater amusement to adorn it with all the finest objects of art belonging to the Medici, because thus concentrated they would form a glorious memorial of his own taste and splendour ! Following his advice Cosimo ordered the Villa Medici at Rome to be stripped of its most valuable works, and on this occasion the "*Wrestlers*" and the "*Knife-grinder*" as it is vulgarly called, some authors also say the Venus, besides many of the most exquisite specimens of ancient sculpture were collected, together with gems, medals, and every other production of the fine arts from all quarters of the globe. A Museum of Natural History was also completed by Redi's influence ; and vanity leading Cosimo to correspond with some of the most renowned men of science in Europe his means of enriching this collection were facilitated. while the money thus expended gave him undeserved philosophical celebrity *. Literature flourished nevertheless, though perhaps real philosophy declined ; but Cosimo allowed his son Prince Ferdinand to be educated by Viviani, Lorenzini, Redi, Norris and other eminent men. The *Cimento* was dissolved, but the Academy *Della Crusca* had revived and moreover commenced a new Tuscan dictionary which gained Cosimo III. more applause amongst foreign nations than he had any right to as a man of letters : still, whether from vanity or other cause, a sovereign who without any love of learning and learned men promotes and patronises both, is entitled to great praise and it might be well for mankind if vanity would always put on so fair and pleasing a complexion.

The Grand Duchess's conduct was a continual and increasing source of anger and mortification to Cosimo, for
 A.D. 1678. she was still too young, handsome, and agreeable not to maintain a strong and favourable influence over the court and cavaliers of France : amongst these all her eccentricities were attributed to youth and native volatility, and even her wildest

* Galluzzi, Lib. viii., cap. ii°.

freaks neither injured her nor gained any sympathy for her husband. A change of ministry, reiterated expostulation from the Duchess of Guise who complained of the conventual laws being violated, and Margaret's increasing levity at length elicited a royal order to confine herself within monastic discipline and not leave the convent or appear at court without royal permission. These regulations were however soon disregarded and the cobweb nature of a young monarch's restrictions on the will of a pretty and agreeable woman who was determined to have her own way, became apparent: the Tuscan ambassador at last wrote in despair to Cosimo, that compassion for ladies had so deeply imbued the hearts of Frenchmen that everything done by women was excused and he was not to expect any stability on that subject. Even the slight seclusion imposed on Margaret became intolerable, wherefore seeing her husband's health giving way, she pretended repentance, and through the pope endeavoured to bring about a reconciliation in the hope of his speedy death and her consequent tuition of the young princes. Cosimo began to waver, but his mother's advice decided him and stopped all further dissimulation. A.D. 1679.

The treaty of Nimeguen rather appeared to promise future hostilities than any permanent peace: Spain had been compelled to cede the greater part of Flanders; the emperor to consider the general allied interests rather than his own or those of Lorraine on which France had imposed severe conditions: Italy, ever divided against itself, remained an unresisting prey to the strongest; and people heedlessly wondered how a powerful and fortunate monarch like Louis XIV. should have neglected so easy a conquest for the toils and hazards of Flemish warfare. England and Holland in close union diminished French resources by monopolizing trade, and the general uncertain state of politics kept all Europe in suspense. The emperor seized this occasion to urge the formation of an Italian

league; but Savoy was too closely connected with the transalpine powers to accede, and Venice being afraid of both France and Turkey only sought to maintain internal tranquillity; the pope, secure of remaining unmolested, cared little whether Naples and Milan belonged to France or Spain; yet a league without these powers would have only endangered the smaller states, and Cosimo was not disposed to risk his own destruction by singly coming forward but rather sought a French or some other matrimonial alliance acceptable to King Louis. To this end he secretly promoted projects of marriage between Anna de' Medici and the Dauphin, and Prince Ferdinand with the Infanta of Portugal, presumptive heiress of that kingdom; but Margaret's influence made him very unpopular at the French court and raised serious obstacles to these designs. This

A.D. 1680. princess still continuing her insane course, set fire to her own chambers with great danger to the convent: she then wrote a letter to Cosimo filled with expressions of bitter hatred and vulgar abuse which afforded great amusement to Louis XIV. and his court, who diverted themselves with Cosimo's jealousy and Margaret's extravagancies as the efforts of two violent spirits in antagonist movement: the lady however was more leniently used, while Cosimo wearied and mortified, fell sick of a long-continued fever and raised his consort's hopes of the Tuscan regency, for which her plans were already formed. She was still more elated on finding that Prince Ferdinand after spurning the Grand Duchess Vittoria's rule, had openly supported her and also maintained a correspondence in despite of every prohibition: but the restoration of Cosimo's health stopped all such speculations, and his increased irritability broke out into acts of cruelty on every soul who abetted this correspondence. The Grand Duchess had openly declared her intention of going to Florence after Cosimo's death and chasing hypocrites and hypocrisy from court; of restoring good taste good government, genius and philosophy.

to their true position ; of banishing Vittoria and her favourites, Albizzi Corsini and Ferroni, whom she called two false devotees and one vile merchant. All this was reported to Cosimo, whose indignation first struck the Lorenzini, two gentlemen of Prince Ferdinand's household famed for their mathematical attainments, who by his orders had written secretly to Margaret : these unfortunate men were imprisoned in the dismal tower of Volterra, a dungeon rivalling those of Venice, where they passed many years in hopeless anguish. Ferdinand indignant at this, broke away at once from all paternal authority and being full of talent and intelligence soon fascinated the Florentine youth, who crowding eagerly around him presented an imposing and formidable opposition to Cosimo. Music, the fine arts, literature, with every prevailing folly and intemperance were the occupation of this society, which hating dissimulation and hypocrisy carried off the good wishes of the Florentines. Their number and influence was soon augmented by the adhesion of Cosimo's brother Prince Francis, who although educated for the Church and enjoying the vast ecclesiastical revenues of his two uncles, was far from devoting himself to theology, and preferred pleasure to the solemn mockery of priests and friars, the idols of Cosimo and the still more bigoted Vittoria. These two princes occupied Florence in the Grand Duke's absence, but when he returned they retired to the country followed by a concourse of youthful spirits that under such auspices braved all the frowns of government. Yet the public hatred of Cosimo, thus borne as it were in triumph on the current of youthful feeling, drew down a cruel persecution. The friars commenced a system of sly and keen inspection into private habits, and while denouncing the bold and open conduct of some, they veiled the transgressions of all who abjectly deferred to their authority. In the midst of this the Grand Duke was further exasperated by his wife's promoting a menial servant to

A.D. 1681.

be her chamberlain and the supposed illicit connexion between them; but religion, bishops, priests, bribes, and cunning, all failed to move her: Louis still laughed at both and stirred not until Cosimo threatened to stop her income which he forbid, but counselled more tolerance and a calmer spirit. The Lorenzini's fate made Cosimo universally odious in Tuscany; and at Paris the Florentine ambassador was reproached with the baseness of his master; wherefore despairing of redress and fearful of Louis, the Grand Duke recalled him and sank into sullen silence and affected resignation. Public affairs

A.D. 1682. also increased his torments: Louis the Fourteenth's ambition was so slightly checked by the treaty of Nimeguen that new confederations were forming and new armies assembling against him: the Turks were rapidly advancing on Vienna, and Hungary was in rebellion: France in possession of Casale menaced the Spaniards in northern Italy, and by the help of Savoy and their own weakness looked on them as an easy prey: Venice still trembled at the Turkish armaments: the pope was passive; and though from his peculiar position he could most easily unite the Italian powers yet from character and selfishness he was the least fit and least likely to undertake it. Spain urged him for the sake of public good; France tried to allure him with the hope of aggrandizement, but he heeded neither; the papal character and politics were changed; ceremony had succeeded to ambition, and more satisfaction now appeared to spring from the titles of pastor and peace-maker than from turbulence and conquest. Cosimo pestered by Spain and scared by France scarcely knew how to act, but at last resolved on maintaining an armed neutrality which thenceforward became his political maxim, although Spain was indignant and even menaced Porto Ferrajo with a siege. The Genoese alone boldly yet imprudently determined to brave France and gallantly stood on their defence; but they were cruelly bombarded and the Doge with four senators compelled in 1684 to crave pardon

from the imperious Louis. Succours were about this time demanded by Austria against the Turks, and Cosimo's idea was to invade the east as a diversion to an enemy already in the heart of Austria! This was preposterous, and so treated by the imperial ambassadors at Florence; they urged that the cost of such an armament would be far better spent at the seat of war, and Cosimo excused his denial of aid on the score of their haughtiness but partially softened it by sending a supply of warlike stores to Trieste. In the meanwhile Vienna was besieged and the terrors of all Christendom only relieved by the memorable victory of King Sobieski and the gallant Charles of Lorraine.

The project of a diversion on an effective scale with better auspices was discussed in 1684 by the emperor Poland and Venice, in which Pope Innocent XI. and Cosimo joined and the latter sent four galleys and other craft with a regiment of infantry to join the Venetians at Zante for operations on the coasts of Dalmatia and Albania. This did not discompose the sultan who knew by experience that no Christian league was of long duration, and the consequent occupation of Santa Maura and Previsa were scarcely felt by the solid Ottoman empire. The submission of Genoa, the French success in Flanders, the fall of Luxemburg, and a menacing force at Casale, filled Italy with terror: Cosimo fearful even for Leghorn endeavoured by increased humility and the constituting Louis arbiter of his children's marriages, to escape the effects of French ambition; such alliances he thought would as it were become that monarch's own work and secure a powerful protector. Prince Ferdinand being now two-and-twenty, with a cultivated mind and active spirit, became tired of home and wished to see the world; but Cosimo was anxious to secure the succession by a previous marriage before his exposure to the tempting excesses of foreign states, especially Venice where all the taste luxury and licentiousness of Italy

were then concentrated, and the most delicate and exciting pleasures reigned paramount in society. Amongst these music, public dancing, and the drama, with all their voluptuousness, held a preëminent station; the two former by some strange ideal combination (perhaps their combination with love and heavenly harmony) were called "*Virtù*" and their professors "*Virtuosi*" and even with so uncourtly a name had become the great objects of princely favour and imperial munificence. The royal, the noble and the wealthy, from both Germany and Italy, flocked in vast numbers to Venice, where Euterpe Venus and Terpsichore reigned in harmony and revelled amidst the pactolian showers poured on them by their numerous votaries. The Duke of Mantua, besides what he had received from France for the strong town of Casale, squandered away his most precious things and ground down his people with excessive taxation only to supply the extravagance of a young "*Virtuosa*," and Prince Ferdinand now burned to meet him in so glorious a career. Cosimo only gave his permission on the terms of previous matrimony with the

A.D. 1686. Portuguese Infanta under the sanction of King Louis;

but the conditions were too hard, namely a constant residence in Portugal, which Ferdinand plumply refused, and the annexation of Tuscany if he succeeded to the Lusitanian throne. Both these displeased even Cosimo whose brother Francis was already a cardinal and his son John Gaston destined to the same dignity, wherefore he was averse as well to the heir-apparent's residence abroad as to a sacrifice of the national independence. The negotiation was therefore abandoned and another begun

A.D. 1687. with Violante of Bavaria sister to the Dauphiness, to

which Ferdinand after great difficulty consented on condition of a previous visit to Lombardy and Venice. The Grand Duchess still continued her annoying conduct and supported by Louis compelled Cosimo to increase her allowance; thus forced to "*drink the bitter cup*," as he himself expressed it, another illness supervened which in despite of temperance nearly

killed him while his wife was triumphantly driving through the streets of Paris supported by Louis XIV. and Madame de Maintenon. On his recovery however the influence of Père la Chaise was employed, and Louis became so far just as to condemn her extravagancies, while Cosimo's reputation was by the same interest partially restored at court. Ferdinand's treaty of marriage was finally settled, and Princess Violante of Bavaria arrived at Florence in December 1688. A. D. 1688.

Cosimo according to ancient custom had previously communicated this to the Senate which instantly voted a "*Donation*" of 200,000 crowns to be levied on the people in honour of these nuptials! From Cosimo the First's days the Medici had been accustomed to display more taste expense and magnificence at their family marriages than on any other occasion, and Cosimo III., being the vainest of that race, resolved to outdo them all in splendour.

The gate near San Gallo was re-opened and Violante made her entry in a car studded with gems; here she was met by Cosimo who himself crowned her with the ancient grand-ducal diadem in a chapel erected on the spot for this ceremony: thence to the palace was a continued triumph, the princess leading a long array of Florentine ladies and all the orders of the state duly marshalled to welcome her, while music, shouting, and frequent salvos of artillery proclaimed the circumstance. In the midst of all this pomp, which resembled the dying colours of the dolphin rather than national vigour and opulence, the whole Peninsula trembled at French ambition, for Louis had recommenced hostilities by invading Flanders and Germany while with another army he threatened Italy. James II. had been driven from the British throne, and William Prince of Orange was chosen to succeed him by the will of a sovereign people in a glorious and bloodless revolution which for once realized the theory of an original compact. The Turks again began to make head, and Venice was forced to cede to

their victorious arms ; the Pope was bearded in his capital by the French ambassador who insolently insisted on a complete exemption from law and justice within the precincts of his own palace ; the league although acting vigorously against Turkey was impeded by Louis who influenced every court in Europe. In this turmoil Cosimo still endeavoured to preserve his neutrality, but doubted its possibility and even the preservation of Tuscany if war once reached Italy : he would willingly have shared the fortunes of Spain by marrying the Princess Anne to King Charles II., whose wife Maria Louisa of Orleans, had died without an heir ; his efforts failed and Tuscany remained to take the chances of an Italian war which now seemed inevitable. The country required to be placed in a state of defence, but an exhausted treasury rendered this impossible, for extravagance of every kind was indulged in either from the vanity of being esteemed opulent by foreigners or pure self-gratification : vast sums were spent on religious ceremonies the foundation of churches and convents, and votive offerings to the most celebrated temples in Europe. Gold was lavishly scattered over the monkish and other priestly satellites who continually surrounded the throne, and pensions without end were given to new proselytes : vast sums went to satisfy the cravings of innumerable spies who were let loose on society and infested every domestic circle : the people too became exposed to a vexatious superintendence, a strict inquisition into their private habits and conduct, which were watched with a jealousy that disgusted and exasperated everybody. Between spies and priests no individual was safe, no family secure, no domestic privacy existed, and Tuscany resembled one vast school of frightened children trembling under the rod of a pedagogue. Yet the public spirit was not entirely broken, the public voice rang loud and shrill against the government, the Prince of Tuscany gave it new heart, and the desire of all was for a change : Ferdinand in condemning Cosimo's conduct despised his regulations

and backed by popular applause kept him in constant agitation and continual apprehension of revolt. But augmented debts, slender revenues, an impoverished country, a discontented people and a devouring clergy, were altogether poisoning and reducing every social relation to a gloomy superstition mis-called religion, to hypocrisy, and abject bigotry: with all this on hand Cosimo found himself unable to continue his prodigality, and therefore began a reform by the reduction of his own personal expenses: this at least showed sincerity, but it was not seconded by Prince Ferdinand whose unbounded extravagance could ill brook the trammels of a fixed income. Presuming on public favour and his great influence in the council he refused to submit, and despising Cosimo's commands he violated the law, and became deaf to all the rhetoric of a priesthood which was immediately let loose on him, from the most obscure monk to the Archbishop of Florence. At length after the receipt of several insolent letters Cosimo made use of Francesco di Castris, a musician who ruled Ferdinand in all things, and through this influence the prince consented to accept a fixed income, and aid in the financial reform.

Italy was now becoming daily more sensible to her danger from transalpine wars and the growing ambition of Louis XIV.: the insolence of his ambassador Lavardin, the invasion of Avignon, and the denouncement of any further neglect in fulfilling the treaty of Pisa, filled the Italian states with apprehensions of another war about the duchy of Castro; but the pope's calm and patient fortitude finally overcame Louis, who recalled Lavardin from Rome, although as yet unabsolved from ecclesiastical censure and therefore shunned like a pestilence as he passed through Tuscany.

The death of Innocent XI. in August opened a field to the exercise of Cardinal Francesco de' Medici's talents for intrigue in its most subtle school; and being intrusted with all the powers of Austria supported by a strong faction in the conclave

he succeeded in electing Cardinal Ottobuoni, a Venetian born at Florence, who in October assumed the tiara under the name of Alexander VIII. and was acceptable to each of the three great monarchies. Reconciliation with France and the restoration of Avignon were the immediate results; but Alexander's subsequent efforts to restore peace and harmony to Europe were less successful than well intended. The increasing power of

A.D. 1690. France had in fact forced Holland Spain and England

into an alliance with the emperor, while Italy was anxiously watching young Victor Amadeus of Savoy, who as the world supposed would side with his nearest and most powerful neighbour; but Leopold had partly gained him with the sovereignty of certain imperial fiefs and a patent that conferred all the honours and prerogatives of royalty. This hurt Medician pride which for ages had been squabbling about precedence with the houses of Savoy and Este, to the detriment of graver interests: remonstrances discussions protests and counter-protests again filled the imperial court in all their pristine folly, until for the sake of quiet a marriage was proposed between Anna de' Medici and the Elector Palatine's son who soon after succeeded to that principality. As brother to the Queens of Spain and Portugal this prince was of great dignity though not equal to the pretensions of Cosimo or his equally ambitious daughter, who had been twice rejected by the King of Spain, by Portugal, by Savoy, and by France and yet was still endeavouring to accomplish an alliance with the Dauphin. Kingly honours with the title of Royal

A.D. 1691.

Highness were at last acquired by Cosimo and put him on a level with Savoy, but his daughter's marriage which soon followed, by more closely uniting Tuscany and Austria, offended Louis who in his anger threatened the neutrality of Leghorn. War had rendered the various Mediterranean ports so insecure that Leghorn had become the only place of general safety: neutrality liberty and security were the three great boons

granted to it by Ferdinand I. Under these auspices the French squadron commanded by Prince Thomas of Savoy was admitted there in 1646 and the Dutch fleet in 1651. But nothing is harder to preserve than a small state's integrity amidst the jar of more powerful nations, and when Cromwell's fleet violated this neutrality by attacking the Dutch, it was fired on from the Tuscan batteries, thus incurring the Protector's indignation: in 1671 France copied this example, and a succession of such violations soon demonstrated the absurdity and utter hollowness of unsupported neutrality in a petty state. The French minister at Florence (for Cosimo had forgotten the old maxim of never allowing a permanent embassy) endeavoured by means of the above examples to frighten him into an abandonment of the Austrian alliance, and Cosimo's humility was fully exercised in deprecating the French king's anger. A proposal was however made that all the belligerents should guarantee the neutrality of Leghorn, and the governor of that city was ordered to lay before the various foreign consuls a convention by which the port and its immediate vicinity were to be protected from violence both within and without. This was soon ratified by France and the other powers, and although only provisional it remained inviolate through subsequent wars, and finally became the basis of Leghorn's immunities in all after treaties. A match proposed by Louis XIV. between John Gaston of Medicis and one of his natural daughters failed from the poverty of Tuscany which rendered it impossible for the Grand Duke to make a sufficient establishment, and on the other hand Leopold, abandoning all notions of an Italian league against France, resolved to send an army across the Alps and raise contributions from every state, except Rome and Venice, as fiefs of the empire. This was rigorously executed by his general Count Caraffa who levied vast sums on Genoa Mantua Parma and Modena; Cosimo remonstrated, asserted the ancient independence of Florence and offered to pay for

certain petty fiefs that were really liable. But Caraffa would take no excuse even though Louis threatened; Lombardy swarmed with Imperial troops, and Tuscany seemed in jeopardy when the Florentine ambassadors at Vienna succeeded in softening Leopold, so that about a hundred thousand crowns were accepted for the imperial fiefs; but even this pressed heavily on a people already driven to the last remnant of their substance.

The death of Pope Alexander VIII. in February 1691 occasioned a five months' contest for the papacy, which ended in the election of Cardinal Antonio Pignatelli of Naples under the name of Innocent XII.; about that epoch the tide of French victory began to slacken and Louis XIV. became daily less imperious to foreign states; this struck Cosimo as a favourable occasion for attacking the Grand Duchess, their mutual hatred never having slept through eighteen years of separation. The

A.D. 1692. stable-boy who had been previously advanced to a share in her favours was displaced by a drummer, and neither passions energy nor love of pleasure were abated in Margaret: Madame de Guise was dead and her place filled by Madame de Harcourt of Lorraine, who being only thirty-two and scarcely exempt from scandal had not sufficient weight to curb the fiery spirit of Margaret. Quarrels, complaints, recriminations, and all the varied sharpness of female warfare disturbed the court and cloister, and the Grand Duchess finally succeeded through royal influence in gaining Cosimo's consent to her removal, but on conditions so stringent that no less than the king's command could make her sign the contract, which she called "*her condemnation.*" Louis the Fourteenth's conduct on this occasion arose partly from the influence of Père la Chaise, who persuaded him that Margaret was always armed with pistols when she came into his presence, and partly from a wish to preserve Cosimo's friendship, because Tuscany was the most convenient place for disembarking an army to oppose the Austrians in Italy. But no sooner had the Grand

Duke thus triumphed than a repetition of the imperial demands again disconcerted him : a second series of contributions were imposed for the next year's campaign, and Caraffa's advice was to repel every remonstrance, otherwise said he, nothing else will ever be gained from any Italian, but by a combination of force and necessity implicit obedience must be compelled.

The clamour in Tuscany at these new impositions broke forth in satires and libels which amused all Italy, yet the oppression which generated them was serious : industry was again taxed, the produce of real property was taxed ; wigs, male and female servants, and every round-footed animal were taxed, until between public irritation and the novelty of the means, a mixture of sharp ridicule and deep indignation pervaded the length and breadth of the land and became rife throughout society. It seemed clear to all that the payment of 103,000 crowns required no such heavy taxation and was only used as a pretence ; but as all the odium fell on Austrian rapacity Leopold found himself the object of general ridicule and inveighed with great bitterness against Cosimo. This clamour extended to Paris and convinced Louis that Tuscany was secretly leagued with Austria : he therefore intimated that Cosimo had exceeded the limits of neutrality wherefore the latter was advised either to discontinue these supplies or be regarded as an enemy. The general conduct of Italian princes Louis said was silly and preposterous, for instead of uniting to resist Austrian oppression they vainly thought to stave off imperial domination by subsidies, which being only incentives to further demands served to revive all the obsolete pretensions of the early emperors. He endeavoured with prophetic sagacity to impress on their minds that *Austria's exaltation would be the downfall of Italian liberty, and only a strong native coalition would enable them to preserve their independence.* But Louis spoke to the winds : the sole steady point of agreement amongst

Italians has ever been to disagree! Suspicion and mutual jealousy are unfortunately too much the characteristics of that nation; individual more than general interest is what usually moves them; they are commonly occupied by the gain of the minute, and seldom look steadily forward either to future profits or the public good, or ever unite to effect it: with excellent writers and deep thinkers, still their public acts are seldom based on broad political principles or their private speculations on patient and prospective returns: the present is all in all, wherefore they continually overreach themselves and lose everything by grasping too quickly and eagerly at an ephemeral good: they are full of talent; far from deficient in head or heart; have sound and beautiful theories; perfectly understand the "*beau ideal*" of honour and honesty, nay they have it constantly in their mouths, perhaps in their hearts, but like some of us much nearer home it is often wanting in their conduct.

Austria, which eight years before saw the Turks at Vienna and the emperor a fugitive in the Tyrol, had now risen above every difficulty and poured her destructive legions over those very plains where she had lately been an unsuccessful supplicant. With this power on one side and France on the other the Italians were unable to resolve on any decisive step, and allowed themselves to be duped or frightened alternately by each, only because they could not agree to form a solid and permanent confederacy which must have been respected by both. Louis XIV. convinced of the impossibility of uniting them by any ties of general interest, adopted the more feasible plan of connecting himself individually and secretly with each prince by particular treaties, in which the interest of every petty state was to be consulted and dexterously moulded on that of Louis himself. For this purpose Count de Rebenac was sent to the Italian courts with a variety of proposals suited to each, and instructions to extract from the aggregate a general plan of resistance to Austria without intrusting any one prince with

the secret of another. Pursuant to these directions Monsieur de Rebenac persuaded the Dukes of Mantua, Parma, and Modena to receive French troops and even furnish them with the stores and provisions already collected for Austria, besides uniting a body of native soldiers with these detachments. Genoa also engaged to supply money and give a passage to the French army; but the adhesion or at least the rigid neutrality of Tuscany became indispensable, wherefore Rebenac endeavoured to work on Cosimo's vanity by communicating the whole scheme and so gain his confidence while he urged the necessity of some decisive step for general security. He thus extracted a promise from that prince to declare himself as soon as the allied army should be strong enough to withstand Rome and Austria, when Tuscany with at least seven thousand men would second all these operations: he however asked permission to avoid the consequence of refusing the imperial demands by offering a subsidy, and a treaty was drawn up to this effect. But as all depended on the pope, and so many difficulties precautions and cases of conscience were introduced by Cosimo, Rebenac found he had to deal with a bigoted priest instead of a statesman, and that it would be impossible to accomplish anything without the introduction of a large force into Italy, which at that moment was not his master's game. Louis however concealed his anger at Cosimo's unsteadiness, but declared that unless that prince openly A.D. 1693. avowed himself no French soldiers should be risked in Tuscany. Austria again descended to the Italian harvest, and no French troops appearing, the usual contributions were rigorously exacted to an amount that would alone have enabled Italy to make head against the oppressors. The people as usual were victims to these princely pastimes: Tuscany in particular, bereft of commerce and manufactures, her agriculture sinking under its burdens, and all her remaining industry crippled by restrictive laws and puzzling regulations, was in the deepest misery, yet

the court again broke forth in all its splendour to blast the hopes and raise the indignation of the people. Reform had ceased and selfish luxury glittered over a starving multitude: Catinat's success against the Austrians at Orbazzano relieved the Tuscan prince from immediate contributions, but not the people: a tax once planted stings like a nettle and is as hard to destroy; besides, financial reformers are ever hateful to courts and that of Cosimo was tired of them! The people rose tumultuously, and surrounding the palace demanded work or bread with the voice of madness; the provinces were nearly depopulated, but famished bands united on the frontier and dividing into gangs of robbers roamed like wild beasts or more ferocious men, for human powers are equally capable of the most terrible evils or the highest good, and the tiger's spring is not more fatal than the acts of man made desperate by oppression! Crimes multiplied, horrors thickened, inexorable judgments and cruel executions struck the orderly citizen with terror while the starving insurgent despised and mocked them: Tuscany seemed to be falling into wild and fearful anarchy: the stolid obstinacy of a government, which declared against being forced by intimidation into any change of measures, coupled with the influence of monopolists and all that legion of vermin existing on courtly corruption, would have overcome a prince even more disposed than Cosimo to lighten public suffering: the Cardinal of Medicis tried in vain to remove those bands that paralysed the industry of Siena which he governed: its wretchedness was attributed entirely to climate, as that of Ireland still is to national character instead of want of knowledge

A.D. 1694. oppression and bad government; party interests ignorance and vain apprehensions in both cases preventing an effective remedy. By dint of importunity the cardinal gained permission to export two-thirds of the Maremma's produce, but so clogged by duties as to act prohibitively not only on exports but even on tillage itself, except that of the richest soils: desolation

accordingly increased and all the efforts of Francis failed to arrest that cold wave of misfortune which was then rolling over the unhappy Medician state. The death of Vittoria, by which the allodial estates of Urbino fell to the second son of Tuscany, and the barrenness of Princess Violante were fresh sources of trouble which led to the forced marriage of Don Giovanni Gastone in order to secure the succession. This prince was now three-and-twenty with a handsome person and cultivated mind, but lived secluded, principally with Cardinal Noris who had been his tutor*: he was disliked by Cosimo, despised by Ferdinand, and therefore neglected by the court and courtiers whose dissipation a restricted allowance prevented his sharing. Botany and antiquity were Gaston's favourite studies, and in the pleasures of science and the cardinal's company he tried to suppress the pain which his own fate and public misfortunes occasioned. Life was thus gliding away when necessity selected him as the destined victim for propagating the brood of Medici by a compulsory marriage with Anna Maria of Saxony, a widow without either mental or personal endowments and fonder of sporting and horsemanship than intellectual pleasures. The unfitness of this couple for each other was no obstacle to Cosimo, but while he took Gaston with him to propitiate the lady of Loretto with votive offerings, Prince Ferdinand made as devout a pilgrimage to the shrines of certain Venetian "*Virtuose*" in exchange for the tedium of a gloomy court and the company of an amiable but neglected wife. Returning with a shattered constitution from Venice he found that Don Gaston's departure was fixed for the ensuing spring, and the latter after his espousals reached Bohemia the following autumn: all this was to suit Cosimo's ambition who wanted to plant a branch of the Medici in Germany and with imperial

A.D. 1695.

A.D. 1696.

A.D. 1697.

* Henry Card^l. Noris was born at the history of Pelagianism and died in Verona in 1631, was first a Jesuit then 1704 as chief librarian of the Vatican. an Augustine monk. He published

aid establish Anna Maria's claim to the duchy of Saxe-Lauenburg in addition to her Bohemian property. Tuscany was sinking, and numerous emigrations increased the general weakness, but Cosimo after the most humble prayers obtained permission from Innocent XII. to place one-fourth of the public burdens on the clergy.

The treaty of Ryswick restored peace to western Europe and left Leopold free to employ all the vigour and talent of Prince Eugene in prosecuting the war against Turkey; Lorraine now returned to its ancient masters, but the Spanish king's approaching death without male heirs threatened new wars for that succession, and Italian independence was still menaced not only by fresh contributions, which so much pusillanimity and disunion deserved, but by a more direct revival of antiquated imperial claims to the sovereignty of Italy. Count Martinez the Austrian minister at Rome had the audacity to publish an edict commanding all feudal lords to prove their titles or within a certain time demand new investitures from the emperor. This extraordinary act of imperial authority in the heart of Rome astounded every Italian from the pontiff downwards, not only as a violation of the sovereignty but as a proof of the emperor's intention to excite new troubles. By a spirited edict of Innocent in reply, the imperial proclamation was declared null, and any obedience to it denounced under heavy penalties, while remonstrances were addressed to Leopold on this preposterous mandate: these expostulations being seconded by Spain and Savoy caused a suspension of the decree, but its object was not altogether abandoned even in the following year.

Age and more interesting pursuits together with diminished restraint had nearly liberated Cosimo from his wife's persecutions when new conjugal discord in Gaston's halls created fresh troubles. One gloomy winter passed in the solitudes of Bohemia after the brilliant skies of Italy, entirely exhausted his patience; wherefore suddenly quitting Reichstadt

A.D. 1698.

he repaired to Paris and visited his mother ; he was soon compelled by Cosimo to revisit a detested home which he however again abandoned in 1699 and fled to Prague, but without escaping from his odious consort.

The expected decease of Charles II. which not only agitated Spain but every state in Europe, was sure to be felt in Italy and more especially at Florence whoever might succeed to that monarchy : the Dauphin and electoral Prince of Bavaria were nearest of kin although the wills of Philip the Second and Fourth favoured Austria ; but the great power and ambition of Louis were powerful auxiliaries to the house of Bourbon. So many pretenders excited great apprehensions in Spain lest the kingdom should be dismembered, for national pride remained though the monarchy was sinking : the usual effects of long wars and misgovernment were in full action ; ruined commerce, banished industry, vast debts, cruel taxes, an empty treasury, abandoned tillage, a wretched people and universal want ; with crime agitation and rebellion to close the melancholy scene.

In Italy the ever-failing attempt to form a league against France and Austria was made with its wonted result : Venice would not move, and Savoy watched for her own aggrandizement : Cosimo resolved to preserve his neutrality in the hope of staving off war from Tuscany, but only exposed himself to the aggression of both parties whenever it suited them, yet the conferences then in progress at the Hague made him suspend his judgment until after an interview with the pope at Rome, where he was going to assist at some religious ceremony. The electoral Prince of Bavaria's death having dissolved a previous agreement between England France and Holland to partition Spain, it was settled that the Dauphin should have Naples the *Presidj* and Guipuscoa ; Lorraine and Bar were to be annexed to France Duke Leopold receiving Milan in exchange, and the Archduke Charles of Austria the

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emperor's second son was to inherit the rest of the Spanish dominions. This augmentation of French power increased the fears of Italy and caused another unsuccessful attempt at a league, after which the pious Cosimo edified all Rome with his zeal ; for to behold the sacred relics at Saint Peter's he actually persuaded Innocent to make him a canon of that cathedral where his religious functions were performed before a numerous and admiring congregation ! Confirmed by Papal advice he returned to Florence and avoiding any direct exposure of his sentiments managed to preserve Tuscan neutrality by equivocation. Innocent XII. died in September and was shortly succeeded by Cardinal Albani under the name of Clement XI. after a real or pretended refusal of the tiara for four successive days. Elected chiefly through Medician influence he was immediately entreated to form an Italian league, and did attempt to accomplish an interview between Louis XIV. and the emperor, meaning to act in person as a mediator. The former threatened to cross the Alps if a league were not formed, and both parties pressed the Grand Duke of Tuscany to declare his sentiments ; but resolved to persevere Cosimo still thought to avoid war by subsidizing Austria.

The death of Charles II. in November 1700 dissolved the last treaty, Louis being more influenced by the Spanish inheritance for his grandson than by those acquisitions previously contemplated ; wherefore accepting the will of Charles, Philip of Anjou was saluted as King of Spain at Paris on the sixteenth of the same month. The Austrians then invaded Lombardy and disputed the possession of Milan with both France and Spain ; but as soon as the latter had acknowledged Philip V. Cosimo accepted the investiture of Siena at his hands, which however pleasing to the Bourbons, failed to procure him equal honours with Savoy at the French court : he was nevertheless required to close the ports of Tuscany against both Dutch and English, and moreover allow French

troops to traverse Lunigiana for the invasion of Modena Leopold's conduct on the other hand was entirely conciliatory and even flattering, and royal honours were accorded to Cosimo by all the German princes especially by the Elector of Brandenburg who had been recently made King of Prussia. Cosimo would have willingly repaid all this by substantial service, but fearful of breaking his neutrality he only requested Leopold's assistance in settling the conjugal differences of Don Gaston and Anna Maria of Saxony. These quarrels had become the amusement of all Germany and drove the unfortunate prince into low society, low vices, and almost every sort of debauchery : Cosimo wished to have them both at Florence, but this required the imperial aid, which slackened when Leopold began to suspect him of leaning towards France in the war of succession, and especially after a visit made to Philip at Leghorn in his way from Naples to Lombardy. A victory gained about this time by the Anglo-Dutch squadrons over that of France rendered parties more equal and seemed likely to bring naval warfare into the Mediterranean which was soon scoured by the allied fleet and leave asked to equip at Leghorn : neutrality was maintained in despite of Louis, for he feared to drive Cosimo into the arms of Austria who was already superior in Lombardy, but a proclamation of the Archduke Charles at Vienna as King of Spain again embarrassed the Grand Duke, although after the example of Venice and Pope Clement XI. he gave no sign of recognition, having already done homage to Philip V. and received Siena at his hands. Leopold assuming that Siena had fallen to the empire became indignant ; contributions were again demanded and the bombardment of Leghorn threatened in case of refusal : the Grand Duke was then declared an enemy, and his acceptance of Philip's mediation in a dispute with Lucca, after the emperor's had been declined, augmented the latter's dissatisfaction. Cosimo tried to propitiate the imperial cabinet with which Leopold's gentle disposition seconded by his wife and the

A.D. 1702.

A.D. 1703.

Elector Palatine's exertions, ultimately prevailed. The years
 1704 and 1705 passed without any Tuscan event of
 A.D. 1704. greater interest than the squabbles of John Gaston
 and his consort ; but the former being now completely tired, after
 A.D. 1705. a final attempt at reconciliation repaired to Florence
 where Ferdinand's declining health made his presence
 necessary. Meanwhile the rapid progress of the allies changed
 the aspect of affairs in Spain and Charles III. found
 A.D. 1706. himself master of some of her fairest provinces when
 Philip abandoned the capital. In Italy alone was Louis suc-
 cessful ; but Vendôme's recal and Prince Eugene of Savoy's
 appointment to oppose his successor the Duke of Orleans,
 brought misfortune even into that quarter. The Emperor Leo-
 pold died in 1705, his son Joseph I. with greater energy of cha-
 racter made a push for the preservation of Savoy, and the fate
 of Italy was soon decided by the battle of Turin where Prince
 Eugene at the head of thirty thousand men attacked the Duke
 of Orleans in his trenches and defeated him on the seventh of
 September 1706 with the capture of more than two hundred
 A.D. 1707. pieces of artillery. Italy was now compelled to sub-
 mit to the demands of Austria and also provide winter
 quarters for her troops ; the Marquis of Pallavicini was des-
 patched to arrange the contribution of Tuscany, demand quarters
 for six regiments, and insist on Cosimo's immediate recognition
 of Charles III. as King of Spain and lord of Siena, under penalty
 of its military occupation and the bombardment of Leghorn by
 the English. Perplexed and terrified, and already obnoxious to
 the British cabinet for his treatment of an English captain,
 Cosimo endeavoured by negotiation to stave off this evil, and
 through the intervention of Holland the anger of Great Britain
 was subdued and the demand of winter quarters relinquished,
 but contributions were most rigidly exacted. France being
 thus driven from Italy, Austria marched on Naples by forcing
 a passage through the pope's dominions : this embroiled the

latter with both France and Spain where Philip by the talents of Vendôme was again in the ascendant.

The condition of Tuscany was rendered more gloomy by the prospect of a failing succession: Anna Maria of Saxony refused to live at Florence and Ferdinand's health was rapidly declining, wherefore it was finally decided that Cardinal Francesco de' Medici should be compelled to marry the young and beautiful Eleonora daughter of Vincenzo Gonzaga Duke of Guastalla and Sablioneta. The conditions of this marriage were settled, and all Tuscany looked with anxiety to its consummation; for bowed down as the people were by misfortune, and with the fate of Spain before them, the idea of a disputed succession terrified them; nor were their spirits raised by one of the severest winters ever experienced in Italy; yet when the king of Denmark arrived at Florence in the midst of all this suffering another burst of courtly extravagance under the sacred name of hospitality made the people indignant! Public attention was however turned to the new marriage, but even this hope was soon blasted when it became known that no persuasion could induce the bride to live with a husband whose diseased and bloated body, the effect of early intemperance, most naturally disgusted her, and Cosimo began to look about for some powerful support to the successor which he now conceived he had a full right to nominate. Tuscany's invariable destiny under the Grand Dukes was to oscillate between France and Spain, alternately bending to each yet often perplexed by the disturbing forces of Germany: a decided adherence to either would have incurred the other's anger; both eagerly looked forward to the house of Medici's extinction for their own aggrandizement, and whichever of them at that epoch should possess the *Presidj* it was believed would be master of Tuscany. The Austrians occupied Orbicello; the French and Spaniards Lungone in Elba, and Port Ercole in the Maremma: Philip V. proposed to give Cosimo

charge of these garrisons until the peace provided Austria would do the same with Orbitello; but a decided refusal at once unveiled the ultimate designs of that power on Tuscany, and the Grand Duke resolved on a system of politics which would secure his own freedom and the independence of the state in his nomination of a successor. By the decree of Augsburg in 1530 Charles V. settled that Alexander of Medici, his heirs male, and then the nearest male relations of that family should be duke and chief of all the Florentine republic, and the subsequent election of Cosimo I. by the senate, which represented the ancient republic, was confirmed under the same conditions in 1537. The inference drawn by Cosimo the Third's advisers was that on the extinction of this family the senate would be bound to elect a successor amongst the nearest male kindred, if any other branch of the Medici could be legally comprised in the imperial decree; or, supposing its provisions extinguished, the state would naturally fall back upon and resume its original liberty and form of republican government. On considering these points it was decided, that as the only object of Charles V. and Clement VII. was to restore the house of Medici to its former power and influence, the descendants of Giovanni di Bicci could alone have been contemplated by them, he having been the original source of that family's greatness. Thence it followed that when this branch should fail, the original object would be accomplished, and no doubt could exist of the nation's right to resume its former state of republican independence; moreover that the last of the Medici could not in honour, conscience, or legal right, dispose of Tuscany in any manner contrary to such interpretation. This reasoning being once established as politically just and conducing to Medician glory, the means of action were next to be considered, and Cosimo imagined that such liberty would be best guaranteed by the power of another republic: the steady friendship of

Holland therefore led him to communicate this intention secretly to the Grand Pensionary Heinsius before any other state, and the Marquis Carlo Rinuccini was despatched to Holland on this business with an ostensible mission to implore the states' influence for an abatement of the contributions, to promise that they should not be renewed, and to demand compensation for those already exacted, by ceding the Tuscan *Presidj* at the next peace. These demands were to be seconded by all the German princes, and also by Queen Anne of England who began to regard with jealousy the Austrian views of Italian conquest. After visiting all these courts Rinuccini reached the Hague where Cosimo's proposal received great applause; assistance was cheerfully promised, for no difficulty whatever arose about Florence; but as Siena and the Tuscan fiefs were held by a very different tenure the claims of relationship and the imperial sanction to their alienation came equally under discussion. The Farnesi as descendants of Margaret daughter of Cosimo II, and Louis XIV as heir to his grandmother Mary of Medicis daughter of Francis I, were the nearest relatives of Cosimo III. and as Florence alone was considered too weak to maintain her proposed independence, all the influence of England and Holland became necessary to gain the emperor's consent to an investiture of the future republic with those fiefs. Both entered warmly into the project for both wished the reëstablishment of Tuscan liberty, and neither was unmindful of the great commercial advantages to be expected from a nation dependent on their protection. It was also deemed expedient to check the designs of Austria, but all their influence failed in A.D. 1711. gaining that cabinet's acquiescence, for it was not only displeased with Cosimo, but Joseph evidently treated Italy as a conquered country or mere fief of the empire. All the Grand Duke's obsequiousness was unavailing, the court of Vienna openly declared its intention of compelling him to acknowledge Charles III. and receiving the investiture of Siena at his hands,

but England and Holland prevented this for the moment. With such feelings nothing favourable was expected from Austria and still less from France, whose object was to secure Tuscany for the Duke of Berri and establish a balance between Austrian and French power in Italy, to which Louis felt sure of the concurrence both of England and Holland, and strove hard for that of Cosimo himself. The death of Cardinal Francesco in February 1711 gave new spirit to these negotiations as Ferdinand's health still declined and Gaston's constitution promised no lengthened life; the two maritime powers therefore became so much the more anxious to settle the fate of Tuscany, while Zinzendorf the imperial ambassador in Holland endeavoured to ascertain the Grand Duke's real sentiments. The independence of Florence was unopposed, but the annexation of Siena and the imperial fiefs was promptly negatived; yet the hopes of those interested in Tuscan liberty were mounting high when an accident altered the whole basis of European politics.

The emperor Joseph I. died of the small-pox in April 1711 without male issue, and by his brother's accession to the imperial crown left Philip apparently without a rival. The maritime powers were disconcerted at thus seeing both Spain and Austria under the Bourbons, and yet none of the allies could calmly contemplate a possible revival of Charles the Fifth's power by a union of the empire, the Spanish monarchy, and the Austrian hereditary dominions. Charles left Spain for Germany and was elected emperor in October, but war continued unmitigated in that miserable country until the treaty of Utrecht reëstablished tranquillity: meanwhile the European monarchs like wreckers were watching the last moments of the foundering Medici, and the political changes consequent upon Joseph's death involved a suspension of Cosimo's plan of succession; wherefore still feeling himself robust, though seventy years of age, and with two sons yet living; he determined to postpone the subject until a more favourable occasion. The pope how-

ever already wanted to establish the grand mastership of San Stefano in his own family; Parma also began to claim the succession; Charles VI. declared that even Florence itself was dependent on the empire as a province of the Italian monarchy; France asserted the rights of the Duke de Berri, or rather of Louis himself; and the Electress Palatine who governed Cosimo, was naturally ambitious of succeeding her brother Gaston on the throne of Tuscany. Many other states anticipated acquisitions or indemnifications at the approaching congress of Utrecht, and Cosimo would then have been wise in asserting his own rights without waiting for the conclusion of peace when more general interests were likely to prove adverse to his wishes. But the Electress Anne was unwilling to hasten these plans; her object was to inherit not only the allodial estates but all Tuscany, and she therefore seconded a proposition made to exclude every female but herself. It was thought, besides a gain of time, that more favourable circumstances might arise either for reëstablishing the republic or adopting the younger branch of some family related to the Medici which along with the name would inherit Tuscany from the Electress. The calm occasioned by a near prospect of peace was considered favourable for effecting this, and the short imperial vacancy was made use of to propitiate the electors not only on that subject but on the injustice of contributions that exceeded the annual value of the fiefs upon which they were levied and which Austria attempted to justify by asserting that Florence was itself an imperial fief and well able to bear the full amount of taxation. This partly succeeded, the electors recommended, notwithstanding the emperor's claims to independence in Italian affairs, that imperial vassals should not be taxed beyond what the laws of the empire allowed, and particularly that justice should be rendered to Cosimo with an end to all such misunderstanding. The Elector Palatine was alarmed as much as Cosimo at this failure and the anger of Charles, who in

his way to Germany refused to see Prince Gaston unless Cosimo consented to receive the investiture of Siena at his hands as King of Spain. Tuscan affairs were entirely postponed until after the coronation, and in their stead a passage through that state with the necessary supplies for nine thousand German troops was demanded preparatory to the siege of Lungone and Port Ercole. This army would necessarily winter in Tuscany and curb the sovereign's independence, even if its real object were correctly stated; but it soon proved to be an army of observation on Cosimo's actions who was suspected of holding secret correspondence with Louis XIV about the Duke of Berri's succession to Tuscany: the suspicion was unfounded, and Cosimo afforded every assistance to the troops on their arrival about the middle of November 1711, but the injustice of compelling him to maintain this force was acknowledged at Vienna and compensation promised. As the demanded investiture of the Electress Palatine with the Tuscan fiefs would have been an acknowledgment of Florentine independence great caution was necessary not to injure the imperial pretensions, yet good policy dictated the expediency of soothing Cosimo's temper so as to induce him to declare Charles VI.

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inheritor of all the allodial possessions of his family. The Electress was in consequence assured of the emperor's undiminished love for her and Cosimo, but that the proclaiming her to be heiress of Tuscany without naming a successor would be an imperfect act and of doubtful consequence, wherefore all parties would benefit if the emperor were declared successor to all the Medician dominions after the extinction of that family, and in no other way could she acquire the demanded investitures. The Electress avoided this proposal by urging its extreme indelicacy when she had two living brothers with prior claims; but the ultimate consequence was great reduction in the contributions and a present respite for Port Ercole, while the army still remained to intimidate Cosimo.

England and Holland promised that when peace came he should be spared this indignity and left independent, wherefore he resolved if it were possible to gain the *Presidj* from the approaching congress without which it would be impossible to leave Tuscany or even the last of the Medici independent. The idea of a republic was now abandoned notwithstanding all the efforts of Rinnucini, who urged it as an act of justice honour and sound policy tending to the glory of his race, and as the wish of his father and other progenitors. At the Congress of Utrecht an assemblage of ministers from almost every state in Europe was present, and not a petty Italian prince but had some compensation to demand or an object of personal interest to accomplish, but as usual all at variance with each other, every one aiming at his particular point without any national combination for poor abandoned Italy. Venice vainly proposed a league to rid Mantua of the Austrians; the pontiff's complaints were unheeded although his territory was bristling with Austrian bayonets; Parma demanded the restitution of Castro and aimed at the Tuscan succession, which by uniting the two states in the person of Princess Elizabeth of Farnese would have constituted a powerful dominion: Louis XIV. looked the same way; Cosimo demanded the Senese garrisons; for which, as they could only be awarded to the emperor who then possessed them; to Philip who pretended to them, or to France who especially coveted them; he offered a discharge of the heavy debts that every one of these powers still owed to Tuscany. Austria plumply denied his claim to any compensation, which she said was all settled by the declarations of Frankfort; and also the right of any power to meddle with these garrisons, belonging as they did exclusively to Charles as Emperor and King of Spain; besides which she asserted, that the debts were mere private transactions foreign to all congressional duties or interference.

The German troops were withdrawn after the capture of

Port Ercole, but Austrian garrisons still interfered with national independence and Cosimo's lamentations only excited a deeper resentment in the mind of Charles: this was sharpened by the suspicion of a secret correspondence between Spain and Tuscany about the succession of a Spanish prince to the grand duchy, so that Cosimo was actually forced to request that the Florentine ambassador might be peremptorily dismissed from

A.D. 1713. Madrid to dissipate Austrian jealousy. The Senese garrisons were finally confirmed to the emperor, and by a secret article between Spain and England, the lordship of Siena was secured to the former with a declaration of its indivisibility from Florence. This article was to be published when Charles VI. had made peace with the Bourbons, in order to save Cosimo from the emperor's displeasure, and by this act they hoped afterwards to influence him in choosing a successor, a right which none of the powers in congress had ventured to infringe.

Prince Ferdinand's death at fifty years of age afflicted Cosimo, not from any paternal affection, but as another step towards the complete extinction of his family: excluded from public affairs his high spirit launched into excesses that ultimately killed him: yet he was generally lamented, as well for his constant opposition to the Grand Duke as from his personal talents and amiability of character: much was expected from him when on the throne; but such hopes in confiding nations are oftener indulged than realised. There is generally some spell upon the seat of royalty which like the chair of Comus seems to corrupt virtue and dissolve benevolence, and even substitute a hard selfish overbearing character for that more generous disposition which has previously won the hearts and raised the hopes of nations. Giovan-Gastone at forty-two years old now became heir-apparent of Tuscany, but with a character entirely dissimilar to Ferdinand's: loving seclusion, and unambitious of power, he lived principally in the country, yet still leading

that sort of debauched life which the misery of an unhappy marriage had driven him to in Germany. Cosimo now resolved to assemble the Senate and declare the Electress Palatine successor to the last male of his family, and on the twenty-seventh of November he formally communicated the intelligence of Prince Ferdinand's death to that body, but simultaneously exhibited a declaratory act made on his sole and individual authority for the succession of Princess Anne, and demanded its instant ratification by the Senate as representative of the ancient Florentine Republic: this was accompanied by a letter explanatory of the state and prospects of Tuscany and the necessity of thus preventing the evils which threatened it. A second act in the form of a decree was also presented which annulled all other regulations about female succession and declared that after Princess Anne's death only male offspring of female branches should succeed to the Medician dominions. But a proceeding so adverse to imperial wishes could not then be safely published and the Senate was bound by oath to secrecy: it was thus that Cosimo hoped to prevent Tuscany from falling into the talons of Austria, as it made an opening for both France and Parma to contest the possession of that state; yet as without publication the act could have no legal force its concealment left a door open to any better proposal: the Princess Anne's right of succession was however solemnly promulgated; public rejoicings followed and messengers were sent to all parts of Europe to announce the event.

Great was the marvel of Vienna at this conduct which that cabinet looked upon as a direct attack on the authority to which Charles VI. so unjustly pretended as
A.D. 1714.
feudal chief of Florence: Cosimo's views were shrewdly divined and he was accused of a wish to introduce a Bourbon in Italy under the cloak of paternal affection for the electress: complaints were instantly lodged with the Palatine for transmission to Tuscany and immediately Cosimo became alarmed, more especially

on hearing that a multitude of jurisconsults and antiquarians were busily engaged both at Vienna and Milan in a search for every document likely to establish the imperial claims to Florence from the days of Charlemagne. This showed a determination to demonstrate if possible by the pen what was meant, in any case, to be afterwards asserted by the sword : Cosimo's greatest reliance was on England and Holland, who repented of their liberality to the house of Austria in Italy, and a justificatory answer was therefore despatched through the same indirect channel, which declared Florentine independence to have been placed by the republic under Medician protection and therefore could not be relinquished to the injury of that people from whom it was originally derived ; but as regarded the fiefs all due respect would be paid to imperial rights. Louis the Fourteenth's advanced age and England's unsettled state hastened the peace of Utrecht without much attention to the interests of minor powers, while hostilities still continued between the houses of Bourbon and Austria although a congress was opened at Radstadt to terminate them. Favoured both by Louis and Philip at this conference the Grand Duke hoped for some advantage as regarded the *Presidj* and Elba : both courts approved of the act of succession, but Louis objected to its incompleteness, because prudence, policy, and national justice required the declaration of an eventual successor with power to sustain Medician glory and Tuscan liberty. Cosimo deemed this indiscreet, at least until peace were made between Spain and Austria, but was not blind to the motive, which favoured the Duke of Parma whose rights would be concentrated in the young Princess Elizabeth through Margaret de Medici daughter of Cosimo II. The queen of Spain was dead and Philip V. while ostensibly treating about other marriages, surprised Europe by the sudden announcement of his union with this princess as a thing already concluded, and thus unexpectedly disconcerted the views of Austria on Italy*.

* Galluzzi, Lib. ix., cap. xi., p. 133.

The peace of Baden between France and Austria left Tuscan affairs unnoticed and was independent of the quarrel with Spain, which still continuing, the question of Siena remained undecided, to the great embarrassment of Cosimo, who however through the elector Palatine stoutly maintained the independence of Florence while his ambassador at Vienna affected ignorance of everything. The freedom bought from Rodolph of Hapsburg by republican Florence was declared null because of the inalienableness of imperial rights, and the celebrated Liebnitz amongst others had orders to collect every argument in favour of Austrian pretensions which could possibly be raked out from German archives. Nor were the Florentines indisposed to the contest, on the contrary they advanced so many proofs of national independence that the Austrian cabinet finally urged Cosimo to demand Charles's formal ratification of the last senatorial act, with assurances of that monarch's condescension. The Grand Duke however firmly maintained his independent position and strong in its justice treated the whole affair with indifference.

A calm succeeded, which was employed by Cosimo in conciliating George I. of England to whom he exposed the danger likely to threaten British commerce if ^{A.D. 1715.} Tuscany fell to a powerful nation disinclined to that perfect neutrality so dear to the Medici; and Rinuccini found the British cabinet willing to second his master's objects by opposing the preponderance of any foreign power in Italy. Louis XIV. died in 1715 leaving the Duke of Orleans regent, for death had been busy with the Bourbons and made a long gap between the octogenarian king and the royal infant who succeeded him, the only link remaining between Orleans and the crown. Philip of Spain having renounced his claims on France the interests of those nations became separate and French politics necessarily changed. By an alliance with England and Holland the regent hoped to consolidate his power and

thus assume a position that would insure him the throne in the event of Louis the Fifteenth's death. This treble union startled Austria, then on the eve of a Turkish war, and induced a gentle attempt to consolidate its power in Italy by establishing a perfect neutrality throughout that Peninsula: Rome was therefore conciliated; a league was established with Venice against Turkey, and the marriage of Prince Antonio Farnese promoted, to prevent Parma and Tuscany falling to the young queen of Spain's male issue. In following up the new plan it

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became expedient to soften that severe aspect which had been hitherto bent on Cosimo: this benignity was mistaken by the latter for a sign of despair in a bad cause, as well as from fear of the maritime powers, and apprehensions of seeing a Bourbon in Italy. A negotiation therefore commenced at Vienna under the auspices of Count Stella the favourite minister of Charles VI., and the *Presidj* and Piombino were demanded in recompense for nominating a successor agreeable to that monarch; besides which the independence of Florence and the general integrity of Tuscany, with a recognition of the late senatorial act, were to be the basis of any subsequent treaty, while the choice of an heir to the Medici was left entirely in the Emperor's hands. These negotiations were cautiously and suspiciously commenced by the Tuscan ambassador Ferdinand Bartolommei, and the Duke of Modena was finally named successor, both as a nephew of the Emperor Joseph's widow and a direct descendant from Cosimo I. through his natural daughter Virginia, therefore acceptable to both parties. The Modenese branch was preferred to that of Lorraine which descended in the female line from queen Catharine of Medicis; and to that of Parma as being more agreeable to Austria in consequence of its claims on Ferrara and Commaccio its connection with the house of Hanover, and the conterminous position of Modena through an extended frontier with Tuscany, to which it was ultimately to be joined.

Charles seemed disposed to accept these terms, but suspicion retarded everything for some months and in the interim the electress palatine, now a widow and disliked by the new elector, retired to Florence whence Violante relict of Prince Ferdinand, making way for Cosimo's favourite child, retired and assumed the government of Siena. The Emperor's consent was finally obtained and even a convention begun, when Cosimo's suspicions were awakened to the existence of a secret understanding with Modena by which a portion of that duchy was to be given to the Emperor as the price of his acquiescence; and subsequent information of a proposal made by England for the cession of the same state to Austria in exchange for Tuscany confirmed them. He therefore resolved to procrastinate and profit by coming events, more especially as the English cabinet assured him that neither Austria nor the Bourbons should become masters of Tuscany. The daring ambition of Cardinal Alberoni who had illegally occupied Sardinia and menaced Porto Ferraio and Leghorn, filled Europe with apprehensions of war and obliged those powers which guaranteed the peace of Utrecht to ponder the consequences: England and France had most need of tranquillity; an unsettled regency and a yet unsteady throne united them, and along with Holland, composed what was denominated the treble alliance. The interests of Spain and Austria were still conflicting when Alberoni's energy roused up the courage of his country to unusual and unexpected exertion, of which the conquest of Sardinia and an attack on Sicily were immediate consequences. This outbreak disconcerted the three allied powers who were compelled to oppose it both for the sake of their own interest and as guarantees of the treaty of Utrecht; and England in particular by another engagement to protect Austria whose possessions were thus violated. A plan of general pacification was proposed: Italy, of which Austria held the greater part and wanted all, became an object of universal interest: Spain

A.D. 1717.

A.D. 1718.

cherished the hope of recovering Naples ; Sicily, of which the Duke of Savoy had been made king at the peace of Utrecht, became a cause of complaint for Austria, who thus saw Naples shorn of its fairest province ; and finally the Medici's inevitable extinction was becoming daily more interesting to all parties. A quadruple alliance between France England Holland and Austria resulted from these events, and the almost extinguished energies of a decaying nation were now miraculously revived by the son of a gardener, while a war suddenly begun was as suddenly arrested by the finger of a village apothecary ! Cardinal Alberoni governed Spain with a vigour that astonished Europe ; the Abbé Dubois ruled in France, and persuaded the four greatest powers of Christendom to maintain universal peace ! These two influenced the whole European republic : the latter gave Sicily to Austria in exchange for Sardinia ; and the succession of Tuscany, without even consulting Cosimo, was settled on Don Carlos, eldest son to Elizabeth Farnese of Parma then Queen of Spain. Charles the Sixth's reluctance to admit a Bourbon into Italy was unscrupulously overcome by destroying Tuscan liberty, making that country a fief of the empire, excluding the Queen of Spain and electress palatine from the succession, annulling the last act of the Florentine senate and all without even deigning to inform the Grand Duke of Tuscany about the matter ! After having been ratified by France and England this treaty was kept secret from Cosimo but shown to the Emperor, who overjoyed at the acquisition of Sicily agreed to everything else. The Duke of Savoy reluctantly swallowed his dose by exchanging fertile Sicily for the wild unhealthy Sardinia an injury he never forgave : Spain altogether rejected the treaty and ordered a fleet and army to act in the Mediterranean ; she scorned to receive as a concession and fief of the empire what was considered to be her legal inheritance ; and part of which indisputably belonged to her. Three months were allowed for

consideration and the Spanish monarch's final accession to the treaty of London, after which the allied powers were at liberty to make other arrangements. That article which so shamelessly sacrificed Tuscany could not be long concealed and filled both the prince, and the people, whose spirit was already up at the bare idea of liberty, with just and unbounded indignation. Cosimo remonstrated but gained only fair and heartless words with unmeaning protestations in reply from every court but the Spanish, which indignant as himself received his complaints with a congenial feeling and eagerly proffered its support. The Marquis Neri Corsini was sent to London for the purpose of turning George I. from so infamous an act, based as was asserted on public good, all the odium of which was attributed by Cosimo to France ; yet England had already sanctioned it, and Austria was too much favoured to make any difficulty. Consolatory expressions and empty promises were all that Tuscany gained by these remonstrances, and though not averse to the successor named, yet the exclusion of Cosimo's favourite child, the trampling on a solemn national decree, and the heartless annihilation of Tuscan independence were all proofs of his folly in omitting to establish the succession at the peace of Utrecht when circumstances were so favourable ; but true to the Florentine character, by over-manceuvring he ultimately forfeited all. His lamentations were too late ; the secret had been sufficiently kept ; the four powers were agreed ; and private instructions soon issued from London for a compulsory fulfilment of the treaty : if Spain's adhesion were not notified within three months Parma and Tuscany were to be disposed of to the exclusion of Queen Elizabeth's sons, with a proviso that neither the Emperor nor any Austrian prince who had land in Italy could inherit them ; and Leghorn, Porto Ferraio, Parma and Placentia were to be garrisoned by Swiss troops paid by the three mediating powers, but swearing allegiance to the reigning sovereigns of those places. Such was the shame-

ful conduct, as far as it related to Tuscany, of the quadruple alliance ; and thus did Cosimo III. behold his dukedom annihilated, his independence crushed, his dignity insulted, his country sold, his tranquillity destroyed, and himself reduced to a mere puppet in his own dominions : curbed by a foreign army, prostrate, manacled, and exposed to the unchecked current of Austrian insolence. He had now only the alternative of throwing himself into the hands of Spain or endeavouring to vindicate the national independence by force of arms, and trusting everything to the chapter of accidents. Unusual energy was finally developed ; the works at Leghorn and Porto Ferrajo were reënforced ; troops were levied throughout Tuscany, the coasts strengthened, and a new but too tardy vigour infused into every mind, yet showing that force alone should make him bow to injustice so abominable. He also entered a solemn protest which declared that no successor to the Medici could be recognized in the free and independent state of Tuscany unless approved by the people through their representative the Florentine senate ; therefore no power had a right to exclude the electress Anne as chosen by that body and hailed with public acclamation : that except by violence there was no way of making a free nation submit to feudal supremacy, a thing utterly at variance with its nature and institutions ; or of introducing garrisons into a neutral and unoffending country which had only been striving to preserve its own peace without molesting any one. England and Holland were at war ; the latter had strenuously opposed this unjust proceeding ; events were uncertain ; a secret understanding was supposed between Spain and Tuscany and Cosimo's warlike attitude was startling because it was believed to be not unsupported ; wherefore his protest was received with unwonted respect.

At the termination of that period assigned for Spain's adhesion the Tuscan succession was considered open to a fresh nomination, and two plans were proposed by France: one

A.D. 1719.

was the exchange of Tuscany for Lorraine and the annexation of the latter to that monarchy as proposed by Louis XIV. the other to substitute Louis for Don Carlos. The house of Modena was again proposed by Austria, and even Savoy and Bavaria pretended to a share of the Medician spoils : but England favoured Lorraine with the proviso that Leghorn and Pisa were to be made imperial cities and left in full liberty. Amongst other pretenders there appeared at Vienna the Prince of Ottajano claiming descent from a remote collateral branch of the Medici : but four centuries of separation with nothing remaining but the name, and no less than two families in Florence of nearer kin entirely excluded him. The Urbino property and grand-mastership of San Stefano were also demanded by the pope, and all these small pretensions were purposely admitted at Vienna to keep Madrid in suspense : but their vexatious and even dangerous influence on Cosimo's peace of mind and government became distressing, especially as the pecuniary demands of Austria were unrelaxed, and on pretence of a Sicilian war more troops and new contributions were sternly thrust upon the people, prudence alone preventing greater and more excessive extortion. An imperial minister resident at Leghorn strenuously contributed to augment Cosimo's vexations by asserting that a feudatory could not remain neutral between his chief and an enemy ; thence an attempt was made to use the fortress of Porto Ferraio against Spain, and this being accompanied by menaces, Cosimo soon found himself and country like children in a crowd, trampled down and smothered by the pressure of more powerful neighbours.

Hostilities now ceased and a congress had assembled at Cambray : the Spanish ministers Landi and San Stefano were ordered to identify the interests of Philip and Cosimo and act with his ambassador Corsini : Philip demanded Gibraltar, the free succession of Parma and Tuscany, and the fulfilment of the Baden treaty as regarded Italy.

Charles looked on a feudal tenure as necessary to exclude any Bourbon from a land which he had marked for himself: England and her king did not entirely agree: *he* looked to German, *she* to British interests: he was a stranger to the nation which for its own convenience had created him its chief magistrate, and which for commercial reasons now inclined to Spain. Cosimo hoped much from the support of Spain and Parma, because the succession of his daughter legalized that of the Farnesi and the Queen of Spain: a manifesto was therefore published which displeased the imperial as much as it pleased the Spanish cabinet; while it revived the disputed supremacy over Florence. Every means were tried to involve all Germany in the discussion of what was deemed a common cause: expectations arose also from France and England, who now leaned to Spain and showed some jealousy of Austria, and though the congress had not yet opened Corsini was active

A.D. 1721. at Cambray. Strong in language and cogent in argument he painted with vivid colours the oppression of Austria which, bad and tyrannical as it then was, would he averred prove only a faint type of what might be expected under the sanction of acknowledged authority! Justice had been notoriously outraged, and he demanded relief from the consequences of so shameful an act. Philip's plenipotentiaries supported Corsini, but differed from Cosimo in their object: the king wished to send Don Carlos immediately to Florence accompanied by a force that would secure his peaceable succession in despite of the emperor and also keep down public agitation, for the nation was powerfully excited by the magic sound of liberty. During these transactions a commercial treaty was announced between Spain and England along with a defensive alliance of those powers with France involving secret articles relative to the Tuscan succession; and this was followed by a double marriage between the two houses of Bourbon which seemed again to have effaced the Pyrenees from European

geography. Spain was silent on Florentine independence but eager in urging the reception of troops; wherefore Cosimo suspected that she also might sacrifice him on the altar of political expediency, and as the treaty of London was still unmodified a little relaxation of the opposition to it was deemed necessary at Florence. This however was not Cosimo's act: now old, decrepid, and plunged in the gloomy pleasures of theology he abandoned public business to the electress the council and the Prince of Tuscany. Gaston scarcely interfered; the electress governed absolutely at home, and managed every foreign negotiation: the prince avoided a sister whom he hated, a father for whom he had no affection, and a system of government of which he entirely disapproved. Her conduct was far more commended; she had mitigated Cosimo's asperity; her wealth maintained a brilliant court, and by expending much in public acts and amusements she had gained a certain degree of popularity. Gaston's shyness was blamed; the people desired an opposition to the sovereign's rigour and he was the only man that could safely lead it; wherefore public feeling was disappointed and a wish became general that she might survive him and succeed to the throne of Tuscany. Her efforts to maintain the senate's decree were therefore strenuously supported by the people, while Gaston was left unnoticed in his beloved obscurity. The death of Cosimo's wife in September 1721 at seventy-six years of age was no relief to him, because active annoyance had long ceased on both sides, but she malignantly left a law-suit on his hands which could only be settled by the Parisian parliament. Her funeral was performed at Florence, and the tradition and memory of her youthful persecutions, the consequent failure of heirs and still impending calamities, embittered the universal detestation for her husband. Continued delay about ex-
ecuting the treaty of London generated suspicion of
a secret engagement amongst the allied powers adverse to its provisions; France and England were especially doubted by

A.D. 1722.

Austria who would only admit Don Carlos into Italy fettered by the strongest bolts of feudal supremacy, therefore deprecated any alteration in the treaty; and this was accompanied by declarations which destroyed all the hopes of that nation in any relief from her intolerable oppression. Clement XI. was succeeded in 1721 by Cardinal Conti under the name of Innocent XIII. who immediately promoted Abbé Dubois to the purple, an object for which he had long been vainly intriguing, with a proportionate expenditure of public money in bribes to the court of Rome. Considering Parma and Placentia as ecclesiastical fiefs the new pontiff fully shared in the general discontent at the treaty of London and would willingly have united with Cosimo had not the fears of the latter prevented it: he was apprehensive that even the appearance of a league might draw the war into Tuscany and set all Italy in a flame, therefore tried to conciliate both Spain and Austria by giving no cause of complaint to either. But on seeing what little was to be expected from the congress, Charles VI. returned to the original plan of a Florentine republic and endeavoured secretly to excite John Gaston and the chief nobility to rise and demand their freedom: it was a proposition too bold for the age and people, and far better suited to the spirit of their ancestors: the desire existed, but the energy of freedom was extinct, long servitude had enfeebled them, and Gaston was not inclined to plunge his country into a premature revolution to please the Emperor. The congress being at length opened Cosimo immediately protested against the fifth article of the London treaty; his protest was accompanied by a memorial from the electress urging the justice of her claims, the promises of Spain and England, the rights of blood, the act of the Florentine senate, and finally the people's will! The last a convenient instrument while seconding the designs of princes, but ever crushed by royal prerogative or aristocratic privilege when roused to the public expression of its own rights and grievances!

It would be no less useless than tedious to continue a dull narrative of uninteresting details, of intrigues and negotiations, of fears, cunning, and dissimulation, of concealed objects and open avowals, as practised by conflicting cabinets and artful statesmen on this vexatious subject : suffice it to repeat that Spain's object was to secure the succession of Don Carlos by his presence with an army in Tuscany ; that it was opposed by Austria and even by Cosimo, who wished first to secure the grand-ducal crown for his daughter ; but as in every case the destruction of Tuscan freedom became inevitable Corsini was ordered to enter a solemn and final protest at Cambray for the purpose of asserting his successor's rights and making the act of unjustifiable violence, then about to be perpetrated by the allied powers, more notoriously odious. A.D. 1723.

This was the last diplomatic transaction of Cosimo III. He was now eighty-one years old : a slow fever and erysipelas attacked him early in September and in fifty-two days reduced him to his grave. Having been early informed of his danger he delivered the reins of government to John Gaston and finished a long, oppressive and tyrannical reign on the last day of October 1723. His rule was unmarked by good, stained and livid with evil, and impressed with bigotry, superstition, and national misery ! Proud, vain, weak, rigorous and implacable, he was the dupe, the slave, and the idol of priests, but the abhorred of his subjects. Hating his sons as he was hated by them, he shortened the elder's days by forcing him to take refuge in debauchery, and ruined the character and happiness of the younger by the most odious domestic tyranny. Loving his own image in his only daughter he latterly governed by her counsel ; less weakly perhaps, but still without feeling or magnanimity. He rioted in courtly splendour but maintained it by the groans of a suffering people, and while loudly complaining of Austrian exactions he made them the pretext and instruments for still more ruinous imposts. Tuscany under him was

a vale of bitter tears ! Dissimulation spread like pestilence : priests and hypocrisy pervaded all ; they sucked the life-blood from society and poisoned domestic happiness : public economy was a mere sound ; the nation was plunged in debt ; abuses long suffered had become the rule and habit of mankind and dishonesty a necessity of the time : industry sank under monopolies, and the people became lazy, idle, false, bigoted, and eminently superstitious !

To preserve tranquillity in Florence Cosimo believed that a large proportion of the inhabitants should depend on him for subsistence and the rest be nourished by hope ; wherefore places were multiplied almost to infinity and variously distributed, but especially as marriage portions to girls recommended by ecclesiastics and other parasites. Great public benefit was supposed to be thus rendered by the propagation of so many pious families all devoutly looking to the public treasury for their maintenance : content with idle mediocrity and listless indolence all ideas of industry and independent spirit evaporated ; necessity no longer urged a provision for the future nor any generous search for more reputable maintenance : like domestic fowls they came daily to be fed, and then departed to cackle lay their eggs and propagate. They donned the saintly exterior along with the inward hypocrisy of ecclesiastics, for a miscalled religion * in the shape of abject submission to the Church was ever their passport, and the victim of priestly concupiscence had sometimes a peculiar claim on her seducer, both for a husband and the favours of a duped and bigoted sovereign. Florence gradually became almost populated by such families and unemployed artisans ; all in continual want, supported by the public, and duly impressed with the idea that government was bound to supply them with bread or work. Their judgment was

* Let it not be imagined that any offence is intended, either here or elsewhere, to the *pure* Roman Catholic religion or its conscientious votaries, whether lay or clerical ; its abuse, not its use, is blamed ; and hypocrisy is not confined to that persuasion, time, or country.

essentially just, for until it be proved that the land cannot maintain its people after every means have been tried, the laws of God and nature forbid that any human being willing to work should starve, let his sustenance come from whatever source it may! Let parks be disparked, pleasure-grounds ploughed up, and corn-fields touch the lordly portico, ere we are entitled to assert that a country cannot maintain its inhabitants or are justified in forcing the most industrious to seek elsewhere that protection they vainly demand at home. Such hardships spring not from an ungrateful soil; not from climate, indolence, inactivity of mind or frame, but from pure misrule, selfish extravagance pride and folly.

This being the condition of Florence under Cosimo we ought not to wonder that with a continuance of absolute government even by a patriot prince the Florentines should still retain strong and melancholy traces of that disgraceful period; an epoch which even now is occasionally lauded by some Tuscan churchmen, but which the nation execrates along with the very name of Medici; for tame obedience is but a poor exchange for the independent spirit of a nation!

The tattered remnants of old republican energy were annihilated by this prince and his priesthood, and a fair field left for every crime to flourish. More than half a century of such government altered the manners and character of Tuscany and from this time may be dated its complete degeneracy and present imperfections, arrested it is true by Peter Leopold but not entirely removed, for though liberal wise and beneficent, Leopold's was still an absolute government. Yet Cosimo III. cannot be justly charged with all this mischief; for much of it, especially the immorality, he is responsible, and he could have prevented what he hastened: the political and commercial variations of the world were alone effecting rapid changes which under a wise prince might have been modified in their action on Tuscany, and the national character fortified to confront them; but

Cosimo precipitated all and ruined his country. He lived and died detested by his people and despised by his neighbours; even Rome herself the holy object of his worship and before which he so abjectly licked the dust, even she despised him for his baseness.

It has been shown that after the republic ceased Florence and its dependencies though greatly augmented in extent yet diminished in their political influence amongst the powers of Europe: in the conflict of more powerful states so slender a bark could scarcely survive without extraneous support from one or the other party. Cosimo I. did all that sagacity and unscrupulous assiduity were capable to give political weight to Tuscany, and this was for a while preserved by the riches and cunning rather than the wisdom of his race; yet even he felt the necessity of foreign assistance and promptly adhered to the power that enthroned him. But Cosimo's spirit was too high, his pride riches and independence of character too great to submit beyond the absolute necessities of personal interest, wherefore he availed himself of every act of Spanish weakness to vindicate and consolidate his independence, and never ceded to wanton and unnecessary pressure. When the genius of Charles V. had ceased to influence Europe Francesco de' Medici became the vassal of Philip II.; the two Ferdinands and Cosimo II. endeavoured to preserve Tuscany from the power of France and Spain, but the vigour and talents of Medician government gradually declined with commerce, wealth, manufactures, and national influence; many other causes assisted, yet the spirit of a Cosimo or Ferdinand would have still sustained their country. Some vigour nevertheless remained, until Cosimo the Third's long and feeble reign altered the character of his subjects by reducing them to priest-ridden sycophants: yet nursed as he was in the cell of bigotry, even a superior mind with such disadvantages would hardly have ventured into the wide fields of science literature and general

intelligence : too irresolute for decision, too timid for risk, in the political tempest, he endeavoured to maintain a neutrality that neither his own character nor the nation were sufficient to sustain, and he was alternately flattered and buffeted by all. The ascension of a Bourbon dynasty to the Spanish throne still more enfeebled the Medici, and Cosimo absorbed by personal vanity meanly endeavoured to gain an external reputation which was justly refused to him at home. His ambassadors were in general mere panders to his folly, not statesmen ; his counsellors parasites, whose law was the caprice and passions of their master : public good and national dignity had no place amongst them ; the studied procrastination and intriguing duplicity of Spain were servilely imitated along with all the pride and superstition of her court. Cosimo's character was imparted to his ministers and thence to the nation ; those only were chosen whose faculties could be fathomed by his shallow intellect, and the princes of Tuscany had no part in the government until Ferdinand forced his own way by exciting the Grand Duke's apprehensions. No responsible minister ruled the cabinet or country ; Cosimo communicated personally with the heads of departments, who consequently became powerful and generally mischievous ; for this system, more suited to an able than a feeble prince, was dear to those that shared the authority but hateful to the people who suffered by it. Magalotti and Bassetti were the most able of his ministers, but the former soon fell from his sovereign's favour while he gained the respect of Europe ; the latter, a coachman's son and friend of Magalotti, retained his influence. Men of genius, to the disgrace of intellect, often prostitute their character and talents to a court, but that of Tuscany was too base for such adulation ; Cosimo exacted too much servility without the faculty of appreciating people of real talent whom even his flattery could rarely allure, though often as much open to it as inferior men. False and feeble parasites dulled the accents of wisdom, and the legisla-

tion of that period bore the stamp of its origin ; a cruel bigoted avaricious despotism ! The great were protected, favoured, and enriched ; the poor oppressed, and the ecclesiastics exalted.

Cosimo's meddling in domestic life passed all bounds ; a law of 1691 forbid any young man to enter a house where there were marriageable girls ; a dominican friar from Volterra made annual tours of inspection through Tuscany to examine into domestic matters, and wherever he discovered discord enmities or other differences, he by royal authority commanded marriages, separations, and imprisonment. A single incident which occurred about this period will serve to illustrate the subject better than any general expressions. Robert Acciaiuoli heir to one of the richest and noblest families in Florence fell in love with Elizabetta Mormorai the young beautiful and accomplished widow of Guiseppe Berardi : the two families were of equal rank, but Robert's uncle, Cardinal Acciaiuoli who aimed at the popedom, wanted to make a match for his nephew that would assist him in reaching this mark, and therefore engaged the Grand Duke in his favour. Cosimo instantly forbid the marriage and confined Elizabetta in a convent. Robert Acciaiuoli's passion became more ungovernable from this opposition and after legally contracting his marriage by the most solemn authenticated documents, he fled to Mantua in order to escape Cosimo's vengeance. While there, he made every exertion to establish the legitimacy of his proceeding by publishing the papers, which were confirmed by all the Lombard theologians but condemned by the Tuscans. This irritated Cosimo who vented his spite on the lady by augmented rigour, and imprisonment in a fortress. Acciaiuoli's indignation increased and his efforts redoubled ; he appealed to Rome, sent a circular to the cardinals who were then in conclave, furnished them with a summary of the whole transaction, and so far succeeded that Elizabeth was released from prison and soon managed to join him at Venice. But Cosimo was not so easily

beaten: they were immediately demanded from that republic on the pretext of having been wanting in respect and loyalty to their sovereign and therefore fled disguised towards Germany, but being arrested at Trent were most shamefully surrendered to Cosimo's vengeance. The tyrant instantly condemned Acciaïoli not only to lose his inheritance but to perpetual imprisonment in the dismal tower called "*Il Maschio*" of Volterra, where his dungeon may still be seen. The lady was allowed to choose between imprisonment with her husband, or liberty, but with a repudiation of the marriage: unlike the most of her sex, she chose the latter and thus gave the unfortunate man a monopoly of that public commiseration which might have been so nobly shared! But she deemed that the sight of her suffering would have redoubled his, and therefore preferred to live and weep in liberty! Yet it was not a free soul that dictated the choice; no chains can fetter that, no walls confine it: Elizabeth would have been far more free in the Maschio of Volterra*!

Forced marriages were common; they belonged to the system of government and occasionally happened even under the republican Medici; but to such crimes the subsequent extinction of Cosimo's family was attributed by the people as a just judgment of the Almighty: all this was natural, for civil and domestic liberty was more outraged, and priestly insolence more augmented by these abominations than by any other of this tyrant's most shameful exploits. The travelling friar from Volterra made his circuit in a royal equipage, proposed what reforms he listed, and all were blindly commanded: priests and monks thus became the permanent tyrants of private families, arbiters of their children's fate, oppressors of the community, disposers of persons and fortunes, which were given to their own adherents, and persecutors of all that presumed to resist. The law of 1691 above mentioned rendered priests still more necessary to the accomplishment of marriages, and this was their object in having it passed; but so

* Osservatore Fioren., vol. iv., p. 72.

many disorders followed that after five years it was repealed. Manners instead of improving became more corrupt, hypocrisy spread, violence crime and atrocities, augmented ; the unhappy people in many cases preferred flight to submission and permanently quitted the country. The priesthood while rioting deep in licenced debauchery punished the very women they seduced, who were pitied by all except the authors of their ruin ! Hypocrisy thus royally encouraged ; manners, customs, education, the whole character of youth imbibed the poison. and formal acts of public devotion were substituted for real Christian morality ; a tendency characteristic of excessive zeal in every religious persuasion. Cosimo urged the Tuscan episcopacy to obey the Council of Trent by establishing schools in each diocese and contributed to the cost, as well as to that for the multiplication of Jesuits' colleges : his motives though mistaken were plausible : he imagined that religion, or at least what he believed religion, was more efficacious than civil government in producing obedience, and he was right ; for a system of ecclesiastical control artfully executed under the sacred name of Christianity debases the human mind, subdues reason, and renders useless the only gift of God that preserves human ascendancy over the brute creation. Monks were deemed the most fitting instruments to effect this ; they were placed over the parish priests and continually occupied the people in attending processions, preachings, doing penance and other external rites so abundant in the Catholic Church. The consequence was a vast augmentation of their numbers from all Christendom at enormous expense ; while the people suffering without mending, became more exasperated, more fearful, and more hypocritical than ever : yet misery and want overcame every feeling but anger and secret hatred, especially at seeing the sums of money spent on proselytism, from the Barbary slave who was converted by force, to the heretics of Holland and Germany who were reclaimed by money ; and even some European princes were not left wholly unmolested.

Inexorable in his judgments, Cosimo hurried through criminal trials as much as he lengthened out all the shocking severity of executions, in order to strike terror by the culprit's agony! Yet nothing was accomplished towards the prevention of crime, but great activity in the destruction of poor criminals; and about the year 1680 for the purpose of hastening trials the magistracy of *Eight* was deprived of its ordinary jurisdiction and a criminal *Ruota* established. This tribunal commanded that executions should take place in the public streets and squares of Florence, to the horror of all the inhabitants: the poor trembled; but the rich triumphed in this severity because they were always favoured; for Cosimo when in want of money which was continually, gave the highest magistracies to the highest bidders; nay, he was even accused of selling his pardon secretly to those best able to purchase impunity for their crimes! But this money passed directly into monkish hands for devout and pious expenditure, and thus was his conscience satisfied! A generally feeble legislation shamefully executed, completed the misgovernment of a reign weak odious and contradictory; the civil jurisdiction was replete with the leaven of Roman ecclesiastical tribunals; church privileges triumphed in Tuscany even more than in Rome itself, and the Inquisition breaking all bounds actually disputed the sovereign prerogatives. Some of its myrmidons who had been arrested at Siena for carrying prohibited arms, were claimed by the inquisitor on pain of excommunication, and the government's officers who captured them cited to answer for their conduct at Rome! The Grand Duke complained, but the excommunication was nevertheless published: the pens of both Tuscan and Roman theologians became active, and the Cardinal of Medicis threatened to retire from Rome; this finally brought the question to issue and produced a treaty which recalled the anathema and the Tuscan inquisitor together. But such quarrels only produced a temporary irritation in Cosimo's mind without weaning him

from the church, or even diminishing his respect for ecclesiastics who never relaxed their insolence. Amongst others, Cardinal Nerli; very properly as it would now be considered but then very insolently; refused to await the Grand Duke's arrival at the cathedral before he began mass! Cardinal Fabbroni would not uncover his head when visited by Cosimo, and moreover refused him the title of Royal Highness, although it was acknowledged by all the Italian princes and most European sovereigns! The desire of maintaining a party at Rome was one cause of Cosimo's submission to such insults and of spending large sums to buy the cardinals' support, but they then generally despised Italian princes. Antonio Maria Fede, a lawyer of great subtlety and a creature of the Medici, was their principal instrument at Rome; he had gained the confidence of Cosimo III., Innocent XII., and Clement XI.: through him Cosimo influenced the former during his whole pontificate, as well as the early years of the latter, and was moreover enabled to serve several German princes at the court of Rome. Such appearance of authority coupled with his ostentation and magnificence deceived the Germans who took him for the first of Italian princes, as indeed he should have been; and this opinion, industriously propagated by the Elector Palatine, was common to all the northern courts. Presents were moreover annually distributed by Cosimo amongst the various European potentates; they consisted of the most valuable Tuscan produce, especially wines, then cultivated by the sovereign and nobility with peculiar care and success and the celebrity of which produced Francesco Redi's inimitable dithyrambic called *Bacchus in Tuscany* a poem that probably has rarely been equalled and never surpassed in any language.

These presents were also extended to the most celebrated foreigners of science and literature with whom his vanity corresponded, and to every foreign court favourite whose influence was worth securing. The splendour of Cosimo the Third's own household was akin to his treatment of strangers, and the whim of

being served by natives of all countries made him import them from every nation at a vast expense, principally by means of the missionaries whom he had sent abroad to convert the world. Luckily this taste did not limit itself to human beings; plants of all kinds were similarly collected and propagated in Tuscany; the natural family taste for botany and agriculture was strong in Cosimo; it also influenced his subjects, and Tuscan wines had a ready sale even in England at that epoch. But all this magnificence was drawn from the sweat of the people; from cruel taxation, debts, new imposts, German contributions, and ecclesiastical rapacity; laws which restricted industry and fostered monopoly, ruined internal trade, and annihilated national resources. Agriculture shared largely in the general gloom, for while the royal and noble possessions teemed with luxuries, large tracts of land were bare even of the commonest productions, and others had entirely resumed their native wildness; thence frequent scarcities, misery, and extensive expatriation: arts of the first necessity languished while large sums were expended in attracting those of luxury from France and England: the people lost all spirit; the decayed artisans existed in idleness on state charity which alone prevented tumults. In 1694 all the silk manufacturers were compelled to make a given quantity of plain and figured silks, receiving a bounty of three per cent. for the former and seven for the latter; but the trial was not repeated, for it produced only expense; and yet was better than mere almsgiving as long as it did not increase the number of workmen thus unnaturally sustained. The Leghorn trade was entirely in foreign hands and the exchanges once so lucrative to Florence had almost wholly settled in the former city: an attempt was made to force the banking trade back on the metropolis, but without producing any effect except extreme inconvenience and disorder at Leghorn; the law was consequently repealed, and served as an additional example of the Grand Duke's folly.

At the instigation of Redi, Magalotti, and others some

attention was directed to arts and sciences and the celebrated Magliabecchi the friend of Cardinal Leopoldo did honour to this reign ; yet neither science nor literature were usefully or sincerely encouraged, but only for royal vanity or convenience. The sole directors of public instruction at this time being monks, all emulation and desire of literary distinction was gradually destroyed in the great mass of their pupils, and every principle of real philosophy became a stranger to their schools : the name of Galileo had become a reproach ; his followers were often persecuted ; the Aristotelian philosophy was universally and exclusively adopted, and by Cosimo's express command, alone admitted into the Pisan University. Thus did the sovereign's weakness, his education, early habits, passions, disposition and natural character unfortunately combine to reduce a fine, high-spirited, and peculiarly intellectual people to the most abject state of mental and physical wretchedness and corrupt morality ; at a time too when other nations were vigorously shooting up into luxuriant civilization, and when unusual firmness and wisdom were required to maintain the character and even the national independence of Tuscany amidst the shock of greater powers*.

COTEMPORARY MONARCHS.—England : Charles II. until 1685 ; then James II. until 1688 ; then William of Orange and Mary, the former until 1702 ; then Anne until 1714 ; George I. of Hanover.—France : Louis XIV. until 1715 ; Regency of Orleans and Louis XV.—Spain : Charles II. until 1700 ; War of Succession between Philip V., Duke of Anjou, of France, and Charles III. of Austria (Charles Emperor in 1711) ; Philip V.—Portugal : Peter II. to 1707 ; Joseph to 1750.—Sicily : Victor Amadeus of Savoy, King from 1713 until 1720 ; then it was re-annexed to Naples in exchange for Sardinia. Emperors : Leopold to 1705 ; Joseph I. to 1710 ; Charles VI.—Popes : Clement X. until 1676 ; Innocent XI. until 1689 ; Alexander VIII. until 1691 ; Innocent XII. until 1700 ; Clement XI. until 1721 ; Innocent XIII. until 1724.—Poland : Michael I. to 1673 ; then John III. (Sobieski) until 1697 ; then Augustus II. (of Saxony) ; Rivalship of Stanislaus I. until 1709.—Naples conquered by Austria in 1706.—Prussia : Frederic III. Elector of Brandenburg in 1688 ; King of Prussia in 1701 ; Frederic-William I. 1713.—Sweden : Charles XI. until 1697 ; then Charles XII. to 1718 ; then Ulrica Eleonora.—Russia : Alexis to 1695 ; then Peter the Great until 1725.

* Galluzzi, *Storia*, Libri vii., viii., ix.

CHAPTER XII.

FROM A.D. 1723 TO A.D. 1737.



GIOVANNI GASTONE,

GRAND DUKE OF TUSCANY.

THE reign of Giovanni Gastone, seventh and last Grand Duke of the Medician race, was like the last years of his father's, employed in one long vexatious struggle for national independence. He mounted the throne A.D. 1723. at fifty-three years of age, and dispensing with the empty forms of assumption and allegiance seemed to take the reins rather as an unavoidable and hateful task than an object of ambition, or any generous wish for the amelioration of his country. Attached to solitude and having been uniformly excluded from government, although his taste might be excusable and even commendable, philosophy should have suggested that the existing opportunity of redressing a nation's wrongs was neither to be lightly neglected nor timidly embraced by a spirited prince, especially by one who himself had so cruelly suffered from tyranny. It was a glorious occasion to sacrifice private tastes on the national altar and draw down on the closing days of his family the blessings of a people who had hitherto generally implored the deepest curses on its head. But this was perhaps too much to expect from a Medici. Nevertheless John Gaston began well and popularly: he dismissed all the spies and hypocritical churchmen who had surrounded Cosimo and he abolished a long list of pensions granted through their influence to Jews, Turks,

heterodox Catholics, and Protestant heretics ; all converted or reclaimed under the auspices of Tuscan missionaries backed by these solid rewards, popularly called "*Pensions on the Creed*," but which formed a great and serious chapter in public expenditure. The reduction of debt, taxation, and useless expense, became one of Gaston's primary objects, but he did not at once and formally abolish the system of vexatious meddling with domestic morality. Nevertheless his condemnation of its severe execution and his openly expressed contempt for spies and informers, soon mitigated its oppressive character and gained him credit with the nation. Imitating Ferdinand II. he mixed freely with his subjects and showed his hatred for the Electress Anne by excluding her from public affairs while the Princess Violante gained an influence over him and the government that her virtue and amiability are said to have justly deserved. The religious gloom of Cosimo's time quickly ceded to gaiety ; even the court dress was changed by Gaston's desire from the old Florentine habit called "*Da Città*" to the prevailing fashion of Paris ; and instead of dark-robed friars clustering about the palace or gliding like evil spirits through the corridors, all the youth and beauty of Florence were soon within its walls ; joyousness soon spread around and was gladly hailed by the community as a harbinger of better days. From the commencement of the Spanish war of succession Italy began to feel very sensibly the influence of foreign manners ; Naples and Lombardy were naturally the first to receive new impressions from the foreigners who swarmed through these provinces, a variation of dress, freer intercourse with women, and many other innovations succeeded, so that ancient customs, once thought decorous modest and even sacred, now became old-fashioned rustic and vulgar, and what had formerly deserved commendation was now ridiculed. A rapid change was thus effected in every part except Tuscany : there it was denounced by the clergy as a triumph of corruption sufficient to draw down

Heaven's vengeance on the people, so that every means were used to stop its progress, and hence those numerous missionaries who infested all the land. The Electress Palatine had already gained popularity by relaxing these severities, but Gaston annihilated them; pardons went forth, penalties were remitted, the exiles returned, and even the public prisons cast out their pale and sickly inmates to enjoy this gleam of sunshine. Cosimo's ministry was nevertheless retained; the Grand Prior del Bene and Marquis Rinuccini directed the cabinet; the first had been advanced rather by favour than experience; the last was a distinguished diplomatist. The Cavaliere Giraldi a man neglected by Cosimo was now made their associate and with the Cavaliere Monte Magni, a creature of that prince, took the burden of public government as secretary of state while Gaston reserved to himself the correspondence with his ambassadors at foreign courts. Forced by circumstances to pursue his father's politics the protest of Cambray was instantly renewed while Elba Leghorn and all internal defences were strengthened against Don Carlos, who was considered not unlikely to make a sudden attempt on the country.

Gaston was invited with certain indications of compulsion to join the quadruple alliance, in order to secure the succession of Don Carlos; and though he found it necessary to temporize with Spain lest she should insist on the introduction of Swiss troops according to the treaty of London, it became also expedient to make use of Austria against their entrance as well as to retard the arrival of Don Carlos himself. All idea of maintaining the Senate's decree was abandoned; for as Spain had ceded the point which most distressed her by accepting the investitures and consequently the feudal supremacy of Austria, she was unlikely to support an act whose nullity would assist her immediate objects. Gaston's only other policy was to secure his sister's inheritance of the vast private property belonging to them, (for his enmity did not extend to her injury) and procure

compensation for that portion of it which had been spent in public improvements. Besides the allodial possessions in Urbino, many Tuscan fiefs had been purchased and incorporated with the crown : ports, fortresses, the whole of the artillery and other property, along with numerous palaces and villas full of precious furniture and specimens of art, were acquired by the private funds of the Medici. Amongst these acquisitions the town and district of Pontremoli formed no inconsiderable portion, and so entire a disregard of justice could scarcely be imagined as to deprive the Electress of this inheritance ; but Spain not being supposed equal to such a purchase, the giving her possession of them at Gaston's death would as was thought secure better terms from his successor. Believing therefore that a simple renewal of the Cambray protest would be sufficient and all negotiation with Spain discontinued, the only plan was to delay the arrival of Don Carlos and by avoiding the threatened garrisons still preserve at least a show of national independence. Circumstances seemed now to favour this object, for Dubois and Stanhope the two principal authors of the treaty of London were dead ; the Duke of Orleans followed them soon after ; Philip V. had abdicated in favour of Louis Prince of the Asturias ; Louis XV. had assumed the government of France, and his minister's sentiments varied from those of his predecessor. Prince Antonio of Parma at the age of forty-five prepared to marry, and Louis of Spain being expected to differ somewhat from the views of his step-mother, the general course of European politics seemed not unlikely to take such a turn as eventually might annul the treaty of London. This expectation was secretly promoted by Charles VI. from whom both England and Holland had been partly alienated by his venturing to establish a mercantile company at Ostend which affected their interests and encouraged Spain to a more open contention with Austria, while the investiture of Siena demanded by Gaston from the

A.D. 1724.

Emperor conformably to Cosimo's final act in 1712, gave strength to their quarrel. Gaston however would take no part in it, asserting that he merely followed the last precedent and was compelled to acknowledge the claims of that party which could most easily annoy him. All this convinced Spain of his leaning to Austria and produced new demands about the Swiss garrisons, with a resolution of forcing his consent to receive Don Carlos by stoutly insisting in congress on the immediate execution of the fifth article of the quadruple treaty. On the part of Austria this was met by a formal denial unless with the Grand Duke of Tuscany's approbation, who by that treaty was to remain unmolested: this was incompatible with the presence of foreign troops, wherefore Gaston was secretly urged to be resolute in his opposition: the new Pope Benedict XIII. was supposed to be on the same side while Parma from dislike to the emperor promoted the Spanish policy. Long discussions succeeded; Austria would hear of no other question until this was settled, and finally the mediating powers threatened a dissolution of congress. The hopes of Tuscany were further revived by Spain's dissatisfaction with England and Holland, (who were accused of mere selfishness about mercantile interests) and her determination to commence a private treaty with Gaston, which was only arrested by the death of Louis, and Philip's consequent re-assumption of the throne. This circumstance coupled with the delicate health of Ferdinand Prince of Asturias, by bringing Don Carlos nearer the throne rendered the nation averse to his quitting Spain. Philip however made a show of forcing Gaston's acquiescence, but was too weak and too anxious for
A.D. 1725.
peace to brave the power of Austria and both cabinets were weary of the quarrel, which only gave the mediating powers a greater ascendancy. A separate treaty was therefore concluded at Vienna independent of both France and England with whom Spain and Austria were dissatisfied: its object was a union of

both monarchies, a commercial arrangement, and the Tuscan succession, but without foreign garrisons either in Tuscany or Parma. Don Carlos was to ascend the throne at Gaston's death by virtue of the investitures already conceded, and the mercantile establishment fixed at Ostend was to be more securely rooted by reciprocal privileges, in despite of the dissatisfaction of both Holland and England. The immediate effect of this was a closer union between France and Great Britain, the dissolution of the congress at Cambray, and general surprise at the secrecy and novelty of such arrangements. Although the Grand Duke was thus relieved from the apprehension of foreign troops he could neither count on the forbearance of Spain nor on the duration of this treaty, and as his maxim was to gain time without committing himself, he ordered the former protest to be renewed before the separation of congress, rejecting every proposition not based upon his untouched sovereign prerogatives and Florentine liberty. This declaration was denounced by the Spanish minister Riperada as an insolent act that would ruin Tuscany; but England France and Austria assured Gaston that no violence would be allowed, and Philip on seeing this resolute conduct wanted the emperor either by force or persuasion to compel him to declare Don Carlos Grand Prince of Tuscany and procure the Senate's sanction to the act. Charles VI. had never recognized that title, which had been assumed by Cosimo III. for the heir-apparent when he himself received the dignity of Royal Highness, and declined any means except persuasion but amused Philip with the hopes of a marriage between Don Carlos and an archduchess in order to detach him from France Prussia and the maritime powers who had just concluded a treaty to keep the peace of Europe. War nevertheless appeared in clear perspective and was prepared for; Charles VI. in particular perceived that he was principally aimed at, and Holland showed that its chief object was to suppress the commerce of Ostend.

Firm in the simple course he had begun and secretly encouraged by Austria, Gaston turned his mind from politics to the relief of his people and to amusements: A.D. 1726. Florence had now become the seat of gaiety, and the Princess Violante's cheerfulness spread itself everywhere, while the abolition of much oppressive taxation showed a real wish of lightening the public burdens which was not unappreciated. His aversion to the punishment of death was another source of popularity, and in some measure restored the natural joyous character of the people, previously so repressed by Cosimo's continual and shocking executions. Commerce industry and agriculture once more showed signs of life; and literature, besides the sovereign's countenance, found a zealous patroness in Violante of Bavaria who encouraged genius in every form: she took especial pleasure in the art of extemporaneous poetry which Bernardo Perfetti of Siena seems to have carried to a degree of perfection that finally won the laurel crown which had been neglected since Petrarca's day; for Tasso died while it was preparing for him. The easiness of manners now prevailing at Florence was condemned by Cosimo's followers, and the Grand Duke's partiality for a bevy of gay licentious young men known as the "*Ruspanti*," from the "*Ruspo*," a piece of money in which they received their weekly allowance, was blamed as an encouragement of depravity. The censure might have been just, for from strict religious forms and the extreme of bigotry nations plunge into licentiousness, and Gaston with considerable qualifications and acquirements was driven by circumstances into some of the most disgusting vices of our nature. He however distinguished favour from justice, and the former was, amongst his companions, no protection against the latter, but his natural mildness was ever prompting him to mercy: all these things combined so closely to alter public opinion that the coming extinction of the Medici began to be no longer considered a blessing by the Tuscan people.

The death of Francesco Farnese Duke of Parma in the spring of 1727 brought hopes of a change in Tuscan politics, and his brother Prince Antonio's projected marriage started the question of his son's succession to the grand duchy instead of Don Carlos; this was warmly discussed by Spain and the allies of Hanover; but amidst the din of warlike preparations the voice of peace was heard and another congress assembled at Cambray. Gaston still remained firm in his resolution against all the efforts of Spain to move him, and again repeated his former protest, Cardinal Fleury Louis the Fifteenth's plenipotentiary undertaking the office of mediator and Tuscan advocate. A slight indisposition of the Grand Duke was purposely represented as a mortal illness by the Spanish and Austrian ambassadors at Florence, and an imperial edict instantly called on the Tuscans to acknowledge Don Carlos when Gaston expired. This disgusting conduct caused him to remonstrate against such disturbance of his government and tempting of his subjects' fidelity. New and unsuccessful negotiations followed, offers were made and rejected, and though Austria showed no displeasure at Gaston's pertinacity the Spanish Cabinet managed so as to have legal documents drawn up for carrying the treaty of Vienna into effect: they were addressed to Don Carlos, the Electress Anne, and the Florentine senate, with full powers for Count Borromeo to put the first in possession of Tuscany at John Gaston's death, and if necessary by force of arms. Furnished with such documents the Spanish and Austrian plenipotentiaries repaired to the second congress of Cambray. It would be idle to continue this long and weary narrative of alternate menace flattery and persuasion, the incessant negotiations of Spain and Austria, and Gaston's unalterable firmness without being able to effect any decisive result. Fleury on the part of France and Walpole on that of England advocated the cause of Tuscany, but both were tied by the treaty of

London, and a secret agreement signed at Madrid in 1721 bound the former not to object to the Tuscan garrisons if composed of Spaniards instead of Swiss, which was confirmed by a second treaty including England. The congress then removed to Soissons where a provisional treaty of peace was signed and the question of Tuscany left untouched, but the Spanish plenipotentiary would hear of no business until satisfaction should be given on this point, and he returned to Madrid with the final propositions of congress comprised in two articles, by which the influence of Austria France and England was to be exerted for the purpose of making the Grand Duke accept Don Carlos without troops, and six months allowed for the king's decision, after which force was to become legitimate.

A.D. 1723.

The Queen Elizabeth Farnese governed Spain ; and her pertinacity coupled with the necessity of seeing the American treasure-ships safe in port caused a delay that kept Europe in suspense : her plan was to gain both England and France and with them their Dutch and German allies ; this she thought would force Austria to admit Spanish troops into Tuscany or else to declare its real sentiments on the proposed marriage of Don Carlos to an archduchess. Meanwhile an armament assembled at Cadiz, as was said to occupy the duchy of Massa then about to be purchased by Spain, but really to second the negotiations ; in this she completely succeeded, both France and England consenting to assist her views in despite of Austria. The conferences were secretly held at Seville where the court resided ; the eyes of Europe were fixed on Cadiz where the armament was prepared ; and Austrian troops moved rapidly on Tuscany : Padre Ascanio the Spanish minister at Florence remonstrated against the impropriety of causing a war on so trifling a point as the introduction of foreign garrisons, but was met by an exposition of the greater impropriety of preserving peace by tamely suffering injustice, and thus abandoning the common cause of nations and individuals ; for the right and

even duty of self-defence was common to all. The dislocation of Gaston's ankle by a fall occasioned another rumour of his death ; the warlike preparations continued ; the British allies accepted all the Spanish propositions, and at Seville on the sixth of November a treaty was signed by Spain France and England with an invitation to Holland, by which six thousand Spanish troops were to be immediately introduced into Tuscany Parma and Placentia, and every means used to insure them a friendly reception from both sovereigns. An oath of obedience was to be immediately made to these princes in everything not opposed to the succession of Don Carlos, and the troops were to be withdrawn when he should be in secure possession of the throne, which was to be defended by the allies against every aggression. By the secret articles a period of four months was allowed for a final arrangement with the Grand Duke of Tuscany, and six more ere the treaty were put in execution. This

A.D. 1730. document was presented on the sixth of January 1730

by the French and English ministers at Florence, with an intimation that after accepting the two principal conditions John Gaston might look for every attention from the Spanish monarch and his confederates. Such an annunciation was expected, but the Grand Duke remained firm, and aware of the Emperor's sentiments resolved to defend himself to the last for the chance of a favourable change. A skilfully-managed discussion was accordingly continued until the movements of Austrian troops showed that at Vienna it was considered as a declaration of war ; and to mortify Philip the Grand Duke was ordered to receive the investiture of Siena at Milan, while he was encouraged to remain firm without breaking off the conferences. A public declaration was simultaneously despatched which though binding him to act with Austria pledged her to nothing, and yet was so far satisfactory as it strengthened him against the allies who offered no terms but a simple acceptance or refusal of the two chief conditions. Austria's promptness startled the

negotiators and gave an opportunity of which Gaston dexterously availed himself by declaring, that as the option of treating separately was denied him by Austrian menaces he would be wrong in exposing Tuscany to all the horrors of war; wherefore until the question of a breach of the treaties of London and Vienna were settled between Austria and the allied powers he could neither continue negotiations nor consent to the admission of troops, but that every act leading to the suspension of war would benefit Don Carlos. This was seconded by a further reënforcement of the threatened garrisons besides a muster of Austrian troops on the Lunigiana frontier; and increased rancour between the disputants with an attempt to involve the whole empire in the quarrel was the consequence. The order for investiture was repeated; fresh alarms menaces excuses and declarations followed on every side; the allies declared obedience to be hostility against themselves; Spain threatened to escheat the duchy; Gaston still maintained that he was not the arbitrator between contending powers but compelled to obey the stronger; the Cadiz expedition was augmented; the allied contingents were assembling; and thirty thousand Austrians whitened the plains of Lombardy. Marshal Daun offered them to Florence; Padre Ascanio menaced Tuscany with desolation, and Spain complained of the injustice of refusing her garrisons. The nearer roll of the thunder alarmed Gaston, who equally fearful of war in Tuscany and too close a connexion with Austria, consented to an immediate successor but still rejected the troops; the softened tone adopted by Spain to gain further concessions failed, for he yet looked to the breaking of some link in the chain that bound him, or to better fortune in the vicissitudes of a war which appeared inevitable.

But notwithstanding that pens and tongues were in fierce action throughout Europe, that swords were glittering, and the whole empire in a ferment through the spirit of its chief;

that warlike preparations resounded from the Danube to the Po, from the Tagus to the Arno; yet all parties were secretly inclined to tranquillity. The Grand Duke made his proposals through Fleury; they were answered by Spain almost in the words of the treaty, with a mere promise that Tuscany should not be the seat of war; that Leghorn should have the Spanish commerce; that the electress should be a member of the cabinet with the title and honours of a grand duchess; but that the treaty of Seville would not be relinquished. Gaston parried this blow as well as he could by again representing his powerlessness in the talons of Austria, but still holding to his last declaration offered to receive Don Carlos during his own lifetime with all the honours of a Tuscan prince, and bound himself by the most solemn acts of the Florentine state to secure his succession.

After this, seeing the utter impossibility of preserving his independence against such a combination of force and injustice, and wearied with the struggle, Gaston at once abandoned public affairs and retiring into the recesses of his palace became invisible to all but the few ministers who enjoyed his confidence, the youth who assisted in driving away his melancholy, and his infamous favourite Giuliano Dami to whom he especially and completely resigned himself. This man was the son of a labourer in the neighbourhood of Florence, afterwards a nightman, then a menial servant to the Marquis Ferdinando Capponi, whence he was promoted to the royal service. Insinuating, handsome, and obsequious, he soon gained an influence over Gaston and accompanying him into Bohemia was the origin and promoter of all that prince's debauchery, for, disgusted with home, he preferred the society of low Florentine attendants to that of nobles who disliked him as an intruding foreigner. His tastes soon became entirely depraved by frequenting the lowest taverns, drinking deep, associating with the worthless, joining their orgies, carousals, gaming, affrays

and general debauchery. Excess soon led to crime; the most disgusting vices were said to have been practised with Giuliano Dami and others; they were continued during his visit to Paris and clung to his skirts at Florence where finally the "*Ruspanti*" became the salaried panders and subjects of his concupiscence. These as it is said amounted to two hundred low-lived foreigners of all nations, and a hundred native gentlemen led by Dami who was made chamberlain of the palace and a Florentine citizen! He shared too in all the magistracies, was the great dispenser of pardons and royal grace, the sole head of domestic affairs, and the only channel of royal audience. With the business of government he was not allowed ostensibly to interfere nor to intercept the course of justice, but in every other act of Gaston his influence was unbounded. It was believed that the Grand Duke made use of this base minion expressly to mortify the noble parasites of his father's old court who preferred exclusion before the indignity of bending to anything short of illustrious infamy. The anti-court party was consequently strong in Florence where open vice and harmless gaiety were at issue with occult wickedness and deep hypocrisy: imputations of religious infidelity were scattered profusely over the courtiers, this being the usual weapon of theological and political malignity in every age and country, from Socrates downwards, against the noblest and most sacred leaders of reform. Friars priests and spies, all the satellites of Cosimo, driven as they were in ridicule from court, most acrimoniously attacked the altered manners of the day, nor did Gaston's moral conduct leave them without strong foundation for rebuke. The transalpine customs, which penetrated into every rank of society, although they probably carried no additional vices to Florence, received their share of censure; international communication had become more frequent in consequence of political events which brought so many countries into closer contact either of friendship or

enmity; from the numerous foreign establishments at Leghorn also flowed a continual stream of itinerant strangers, who being no longer repelled by the religious frowns of Cosimo crowded to the gaieties of Florence, and thus by a reciprocal communication of new ideas habits and customs the Florentines were gradually assimilated to other European nations. All the devotees under the electress warred against this and unsparingly taunted Gaston with his licentiousness, while the young gay and careless revelled even to excess in their recovered freedom, and many that were themselves virtuous scrupled not to excuse the errors of a prince who had restored them to social enjoyment. Disposed to anything but a return to the murky atmosphere whence they had just escaped and detesting the electress, they hailed her exclusion from power by the treaty of London as a blessed dispensation which promised the long continuance of their present liberty. This jar of opinions also pervaded the ministry; but amongst the masses a successor was desired who would rigidly maintain Gaston's principles of government the benefit of which they felt, while his vices were hidden in the distance, or but dimly seen. Such discord inclined Spain and Austria, probably with good foundation, to believe in the existence of a strong republican party quite ready to dispute the treaty of London, the more so as Gaston liberally tolerated any expression of political opinions consistent with public tranquillity, and feeling that national independence was no more, confined himself to the single object of saving his people from the calamities of unnecessary war.

The death of Benedict XIII. gave Italy some hopes of a successor possessed of sufficient character to become an effectual mediator by saving Europe from convulsion, and Cardinal Corsini's election under the name of Clement XI. rather strengthened this expectation. The crisis was however too strong, and parties too equally matched and excited for mere reason unsupported by physical force to influence; and the imperial com-

mand for Gaston to receive the Senese investiture without delay was considered by the allies as an open declaration of war. Padre Ascanio who spared neither protests nor menaces, was seconded by the French and English ministers at Florence ; Gaston still averred his inability to resist unless the disputants made some compromise amongst themselves, in which case he was ready to acquiesce. On the third of August the investiture took place by proxy at Milan, whereupon Leghorn was threatened on one side and the Baron de Molck sent by Marshal Daun to demand Gaston's leave for the occupation of that city by the Austrians on the other, but Gaston refused this as inexpedient. Better feelings soon influenced the allies, who seconded by the palpable interest of Don Carlos together with that of the nations established at Leghorn, supported by Pope Clement's mediation, made them declare Tuscany entirely exempt from hostilities : Gaston then offered to receive the Spanish prince with a native body guard provided that the garrisons were not mentioned ; but this was mistaken for fear and Spain hastened her preparations though slackly assisted by the allies. Gaston was again urged and again refused to admit Austrian garrisons ; this encouraged the confederates to proclaim Tuscan neutrality on that particular condition, which was considered at Vienna as a mere artifice but still restored a handle to negotiations that had been broken off by the refusal of any terms not based on the introduction of Spanish troops. The allies still delayed ; papal ministers influenced the Spanish queen ; her fleet was dismantled ; the Austrians retired into Lombardy ; the approach of winter suspended hostilities, gave time for reflection, and ultimately for fresh negotiations. This delay convinced most of the allies that they were A.D. 1731. playing the Spanish game without an adequate recompense, and that a marriage between Don Carlos and an Austrian princess might ultimately unite the Italian provinces under one sovereign, which joined with other political and mercantile

objects, made each think of treating separately with the Emperor, at a moment too when the Duke of Parma's death seemed more likely to accelerate than suspend hostilities. This prince expired in January leaving the duchy to an expected child; but general Stampa instantly marched six thousand Austrians into the Parmesan, declaring that it would be restored, if necessary, after the result of the Duchess's confinement were known. Gaston felt this to be a type of his own fate, and his subjects as an omen of their country's destiny; but the event was quietly taken by both the Bourbon cabinets, and on the sixteenth of March Mr. Robinson signed a treaty between England and Austria which led to a second with Spain and united Holland to the Emperor. A guarantee of the "Pragmatic Sanction," including the disputed article of Spanish garrisons in Tuscany and Parma, formed its base; and as regarded those states it was a mere repetition of the treaties of Seville London and Vienna; the two last having been alone acknowledged by Austria. This proceeding convinced Gaston that he was not more secure in the hands of friends than foes, seeing that a convention in which he was so deeply interested could be signed by the former without even consulting him on the subject. The Spanish ambassador at Vienna, now occupied himself in reconciling Philip and Charles, and as the Duchess of Parma's pregnancy proved false, he demanded that province for Don Carlos. All these vexations combined to make the Grand Duke relinquish every idea of national independence and by one decided act connect himself exclusively with Spain rather than tamely succumb to the caprice of two interested monarchs: this was hastened by the demand of Padre Ascanio for an avowal of his intentions, and Princess Violante's death so augmented his sorrows that abandoning the affair entirely to ministers he again shrunk into obscurity. Violante was a serious loss to all Tuscany; her virtues were appreciated, her talents admired, her beneficence felt; she

was lamented by the learned, the friendless and the gay : the arts acknowledged her protecting hand, and the modesty of genius had no need to shrink from wealthy insolence in her halls or presence : cheerfulness followed her steps, and even the gloomy Cosimo was influenced by her virtues : her heart had been her husband's, but respect and attention was all he gave her in return. She never complained. She received the golden rose from Pope Benedict as a tribute to her numerous virtues ; the tears of a nation traced her epitaph ; her monument was in their hearts ! Between Spain and Austria it was difficult for Tuscany to negotiate, even though willing to surrender its liberty : the displeasure of either might in a moment have filled all the land with war, and a new convention signed by England at Seville confirming the former treaty, showed the inutility of expecting any postponement of its execution ! The Grand Duke took a more dignified course by treating directly and independently with Spain wherefore a treaty was signed on the twenty-fifth of July in which neither imperial supremacy nor foreign garrisons were openly mentioned, the latter being deprecated in a secret article with a conditional promise of letting them march through Tuscany to Parma. About the same time, in consequence of Louis the Fifteenth's denial of the Pragmatic Sanction, Charles VI. endeavoured to deprive France of her allies, and a convention was signed by the Duke of Leria to secure Don Carlos's succession in conformity with all preceding treaties, leaving Gaston the option of accepting it within two months or of submitting to force. Great was the surprise of Austria when she became acquainted with the convention of Florence and it was promptly opposed for not containing a formal acknowledgment of imperial supremacy, for not expressly stipulating the admission of foreign troops, and for granting to the Electress Palatine the title of Grand Duchess of Tuscany : it was also repudiated as infringing on the imperial prerogative and being at variance

with all former treaties ; but the other powers although coinciding in this opinion applauded Gaston's conduct. This convention was but partially and provisionally ratified even by Spain, the rest insisting on its nullity unless sanctioned by them after the treaty of Vienna should be refused by Tuscany. At length the Grand Duke convinced that the struggle was useless ; seeing the act regarded as a mere private agreement ; finding that he was opposed by all, threatened by all, sacrificed by all ; finally determined to acquiesce in the treaty of Vienna ; but he simultaneously deposited a secret protest in the Archbishop of Pisa's hands declaring that violence alone constrained him to sign that treaty and therefore his people were left, and he meant them to be left, free and independent as when they first fell under the Medician government. This truly was not saying much, but the proceedings of the allied powers, with a shade of difference for Holland, was marked from first to last by a shameless contempt of justice, unnecessary insult to a helpless nation, a heartless and indefensible trampling on the last remnant of an ancient and illustrious house ; for with all their faults they were illustrious ; and by a selfish insatiable ambition which, too ravenous to await the course of nature, vulture-like devoured the helpless victim while yet alive and in its agony ! England, to her shame be it spoken, was one of the principal actors in this disgraceful transaction, an act of political atrocity unequalled except by the subsequent spoliations of Silesia and monster-crime against unhappy Poland. "The English" says a modern author, "with a doubtful liberty at home are tyrants everywhere else." And there is unhappily too much truth in the remark.

In the middle of October certain Spanish commissioners, the forerunners of Don Carlos de Bourbon and his troops, arrived at Leghorn, and so vivid was the recollection of Austrian oppressions, so pleased were the people at escaping from that hateful rule that they even welcomed the Spaniards as deli-

verers. Five-and-twenty Spanish pendants and seven galleys commanded by the Marquis Mari and Don Miguel Reggio, with six British men-of-war under Admiral Wager, soon anchored off that port and landed the troops under Count de Charnay, who after taking the Tuscan oath of allegiance remained in supreme military command without touching the civil government, the troops being distributed through Leghorn in the proportion of two Spaniards to one Italian soldier. Charnay swore allegiance on the first of November and multitudes of native and foreign inhabitants welcomed the Spaniards with universal shouts of applause; so blinding is the escape from one danger before another has had time to restore the senses! This force was beyond the specified number, but all in excellent discipline, well-equipped, and paid in advance, with strict commands to conciliate the people: Austria denied the necessity of having any soldiers in Parma, complained of Spain's keeping the whole body in Tuscany as an injustice to Gaston, and assured him, if it were his wish to get rid of them or even of Don Carlos himself, an appeal to the emperor would accomplish it. This was mockery, and John Gaston replied with a natural bitterness of feeling, that after twelve years' resistance, after having been abandoned by all his so-called friends, and especially manacled by Charles himself, such an offer was worse than useless, particularly when he was already reduced by them to the humiliating condition of not daring to offend the sovereigns who oppressed him. But notwithstanding these troops the Austrians still persisted in occupying Parma under a variety of those plausible excuses which sprout so luxuriantly in the minds of statesmen and diplomatists when about to commit a flagrant injustice.

Don Carlos arrived at Leghorn on the twenty-seventh of December, being then about sixteen years of age, and received every mark of honour from the court of Florence: attended by his governor the Count of San Stefano
A.D. 1732.
and a brilliant train of Spanish gentlemen he was nevertheless

enjoined to adopt the Italian customs and conciliate everybody; wherefore after a time his household was reduced to an equal proportion of Spaniards Tuscans and natives of Parma. The small-pox kept him at Leghorn until February 1732 when Gaston who was often compelled to keep his bed, received him at Florence in that situation to avoid useless ceremony. The satisfaction with which Don Carlos was everywhere welcomed by the Tuscans inflamed Austrian jealousy, nor was it allayed on that prince's arrival at Parma where a medal appeared with the image of a woman holding a lily, and the motto "*Spes Publica*" as though every Italian's hope was concentrated in the house of Bourbon. A succession of trifling circumstances kept this feeling alive, and a Spanish armament equipped for some secret object, alarmed the emperor: Charles, even while in continual fear about the Pragmatic Sanction, had no scruple whatever in violating John Gaston's right of appointing a successor to Tuscany, although with the prospect of his daughter Maria Theresa, being scarcely able to sustain the unjustifiable aggressions of kingly ambition! But on this act being guaranteed by the German Diet Charles became more bold in his enmity to Don Carlos; a feeling which Gaston strove unsuccessfully to repress by proposing a marriage with the second Archduchess of Austria; and to give that court as little offence as possible he resolved at the national festival of Saint John the Baptist to acknowledge Don Carlos as *Grand Prince* and heir of Tuscany; because it was then customary to present offerings and render tribute to the sovereign, or if he were absent, to his acknowledged successor. This however gave high offence; it was denounced as a breach of all conventions; an open attack on imperial supremacy and a public denial of all feudal allegiance; an edict was immediately issued to annul the whole proceeding, declare the title of "*Grand Prince*" illegitimate, and admonish Gaston not to violate any previous treaty or convention. Another imperial decree was simultaneously addressed

to the Senate with a prohibition on pain of the emperor's displeasure and the penalty of 100 golden marks to acknowledge Don Carlos, even as successor, before Gaston died. Not satisfied with these insolent acts, another decree recapitulating their contents was addressed to the Tuscan and all other subjects generally; forbidding them to render any homage to Don Carlos while the Grand Duke lived; and even then, if he were still a minor, the Duchess Dorothea as tutress of Parma was to receive it from that people. Gaston declared that the first decree required consideration; the Senate boldly rejected the second, averring that they acknowledged no sovereign but the Grand Duke of Tuscany; and Count Caimo imperial minister at Florence was advised not to publish the prohibition, as his safety might be risked between Spanish bayonets and public indignation. But in order to smuggle this decree into the Senate Caimo disguised one of his attendants as a pilgrim who on pretence of presenting a petition delivered it to the grand chancellor and immediately absconded: the paper was instantly carried unopened to the sovereign while the Senate formally declared that they did not receive it.

Spain's intention had been to accept the mediation of England, but these events proved the insecurity of Carlos and the likelihood of war; whereupon she began to draw closer towards France whose final object was a partition of the Austrian dominions, while that of Charles VI. was their future integrity under the Pragmatic Sanction. He had already determined to marry Maria Theresa to Francis Stephen Duke of Lorraine a connection of the Hapsburg race and one who detested France for her conduct towards his country; but the contemplation of a prince on the imperial throne whose dominions were so convenient for molesting France overcame Fleury's pacific character and made him use the most strenuous efforts to weaken Austria: in this, Spain joined heart and hand from her desire to secure Don Carlos, and if possible

increase his dominions by a French marriage and union of all the Italian provinces into a single state. A sharp recriminatory negotiation followed betwixt Spain and Austria about
A.D. 1733. the Florentine transactions: the former insisted on a formal revocation of these obnoxious acts, which Charles as plumply refused; England tried in vain to restore tranquillity, but Gaston remained a passive spectator of the combat. As France showed no signs of life, Charles VI. became persuaded that Philip would not withstand him alone and made no preparation for immediate hostilities; but the sudden death of Frederick Augustus II. King of Poland threw all Europe into confusion. That nation immediately divided; one party supported Stanislaus Leszinski who had previously been driven from the throne by the victor of Pultava; the other declared for Augustus Elector of Saxony son of the deceased monarch. Stanislaus was brother to the Queen of France and strongly supported by Louis XV. but hated by Russia from ancient rivalry, and by Austria because he was the friend and correspondent of Ragotzki leader of the Hungarian rebels. Augustus as a guarantee of the Pragmatic Sanction had the imperial countenance; and as the son of an old adherent and rival of Stanislaus, also that of Anne Empress of Russia: the invasion of Poland by Anne and the election of Augustus by the Lithuanians and their party, began a northern war; the French occupied Lorraine, crossed the Rhine, entered Piedmont under Villars, and joined the Sardinian army, which led by the king in person ravaged the Milanese and terrified Austria, the more so as Spain, where extreme activity had succeeded to perfect repose, was expected immediately to join them. Charles VI. not thinking it for Don Carlos's interest that a partition of the Italian states, as supposed to be settled between France and Savoy, should take place, counted on the Queen of Spain's keeping aloof from any arrangement that did not aggrandize her son and therefore was about enticing her from

the French alliance, when he suddenly heard of her declaring Spain loosed from every obligation to Austria and the equipment of an armament for Leghorn. This alarmed Gaston, but he was assured by the three courts that his dominions should not only be respected but defended if necessary against Austrian aggressions. Thirty thousand Spaniards soon disembarked at Leghorn under the Conde de Montemar who astounded Gaston by demanding permanent quarters instead of a simple passage through Tuscany: provisions were already scarce, and the idea of supporting such an army overwhelmed both the sovereign and his subjects. Remonstrance was now useless; the sovereign of Tuscany was a mere captive in his palace and he could only oppose resignation to violence, so with the exception of a small detachment at Massa di Carrara and Lavenza, this large army was quartered on Florentine Tuscany in addition to the permanent garrisons. Such was the first act of Spanish friendship; the future was yet in clouds! Count San Stefano and Montemar were at variance; Elizabeth Queen of Spain hated Savoy and differed with Philip about her son's proceedings in Italy: the Tuscans alarmed at the uncertainty of their fate, burdened with a foreign army, scared by the prospect of war, by their sovereign's invisibility, his vile subjection to minions within, and strangers without the palace; the increasing price of food and every other necessary, began as usual to break into parties which agitated the capital. Animosities arose, spirits were excited, and the want of perfect discipline in the army completed general discontent. The Padre Ascanio took this occasion to publish an insolent manifesto, which threatened the anti-Spanish party, while it assured the people at large of their safety from foreign aggression; this he hinted might not be the good fortune of any other Italian state, as thirty thousand men were not assembled to play; but that effective steps would be taken if necessary to enforce universal obedience and secure the sovereign's tranquillity:

neither was Gaston to be any more abused by whispers against the occupation of Tuscany by Spaniards nor filled with alarms about the exhausting of his treasury for their subsistence.

This was rather the language of insurrection than friendly diplomacy, but thirty thousand soldiers emboldened the priest and depressed the monarch! So Gaston was silent.

Except Great Britain and Holland almost all Europe rang with arms: Augustus and the Russians had advanced
A.D. 1734. on Warsaw: Stanislaus was shut up in Dantzic: the French had taken Kell and spread themselves in Germany; the Castle of Milan had surrendered, and Mantua was beleaguered by the combined armies: a body of Spaniards had joined them to protect Parma, and the remainder under Don Carlos in person were preparing for the conquest of Naples. At Vienna everything was in confusion, succours from England and Holland were vainly implored; the King of Sardinia and Don Carlos were to be put to the ban of the empire, and the Diet of Ratisbon, notwithstanding the opposition of three electors, had made this a war of the whole Germanic body. An army of fifty thousand men poured down from the Tyrol with a view of entering Tuscany by Pontremoli or the Modenese, then to beat the Spaniards and baffle their design on Naples while the capture of Leghorn was to ensure supplies. Marshal Villars had orders to prevent this; Montemar occupied the Parmesan frontier whence Don Carlos was recalled, and towards the end of February he marched to the conquest of Naples a state which he was afterwards destined to rule with some reputation as a sovereign. This army's removal encouraged the Florentine imperialists, and the tranquillity which had been maintained by Ascanio's manifesto, was again disturbed under secret encouragement from Count Caimo: open quarrels soon arose in the streets, with loss of life and disorders so serious that Gaston was obliged to reënforce his palace

guard, and from fear of imperial anger, hostile armies, personal indignity, and conscious helplessness, suffered continual anguish. As Don Carlos before the middle of May had without opposition reduced Naples, Tuscany saw itself destined to become either a mere province or once more a bone of contention for the voracity of more powerful nations. In these circumstances the Grand Duke deeming an indifferent sovereign on the spot better than a good one far away, asked for the Infante Don Philip as a substitute for Carlos ; but France had other views, and the passage of the Po by the Austrians was beginning to terrify Florence when intelligence of their being defeated at the battle of Parma relieved the general anxiety. Carlos had nearly finished the reduction of both Sicilies, the citadel of Messina alone holding out, and was proclaimed king with all the Spanish rights of monarchy in Naples. By this the *Presidj* were deprived of their regular Neapolitan supplies, and therefore ravaged Tuscany : Gaston's complaints stood unheeded and he called the militia out until fresh troops arrived from Spain to oppose them ; such was his weakness !

Meanwhile Charles VI. proved unfortunate everywhere but in Poland ; he blamed his ministers, but refused all friendly mediation on the plea that the allied forces, not their counsels, were due by treaty : Fleury was peaceably disposed, but Spain would listen to no terms unless based on the abdication of Italy by Austria : Savoy wanted Milan, which Louis refused to give her ; this however did not suit either Holland or England, and Fleury had also his own views for France : the two former states suggested a plan of general pacification with the equipment of a British fleet, but Charles VI.

A.D. 1735.

was irresolute ; other obstacles intervened ; Spain marched eighteen thousand men from Naples to Tuscany on their route to Mantua which they were about to besiege, and the abilities of Patiño the Spanish minister furnished ample resources for war. Dissensions broke out before Mantua between Montemar

and the allies ; the siege did not prosper, and peace was ultimately hoped for : Charles who anxiously wished for it had secret offers from Fleury ; the maritime powers were discussing the necessity of an armistice and a new congress, and almost every other cabinet eagerly circulated its own especial plan.

The general result was an agreement to certain preliminaries signed on the third of October which declared that Francis III. of Lorraine should exchange his duchy for the eventual possession of Tuscany, and Stanislaus become Duke of Lorraine with immediate possession of Bar : that Augustus was to keep Poland ; that six thousand Germans were to relieve the Spaniards in Tuscany ; Leghorn to remain free ; Don Carlos to be king of both Sicilies with the *Presidj* and Porto Lungone, and Austria to retain all other conquests including Parma, but under an obligation never to demand the disincamation of Castro. To Sardinia was awarded the choice of two Milanese districts on the far side of the Tesino besides some smaller feudal possessions : the Pragmatic Sanction was to be secured, an immediate armistice proclaimed, and a general congress appointed to settle the definitive treaty. Hostilities were tacitly suspended between France and Austria but the preliminaries as yet kept secret, while thirty thousand Austrians suddenly descended from the Tyrol, raised the siege of Mantua, and harassed the retreat of Montemar as far as Bologna. The Lombard armistice was published in November, and Tuscany again shuddered at the thoughts of her new destination : the very idea of an Austrian prince was hateful in itself, and the contributions were far too vividly recollected not to make her dread and abominate the presence of German garrisons. John Gaston filled Paris and Vienna with lamentations, but after having been first outraged and degraded he was now considered as a mere object of sale for the use of his oppressors ! The Spanish army thus driven from Lombardy retired into Tuscany while the Austrians pressed upon the frontier, but without any breach

of neutrality. Montemar encamped on the plain of Ripoli two miles from Florence whence the Imperialists tried to dislodge him by threatening Naples; but reinforcements arriving at Leghorn a sufficient system of defence was established. Gaston on seeing all previous arrangements fail, endeavoured to strike one more blow for Tuscan liberty and his sister's succession, but the die was cast and prayers and remonstrances were unavailing. An armistice then took place between the Spanish and Austrian armies, but Montemar refusing to evacuate Tuscany without orders from his court the people were still compelled to support his numerous legions. Spain was still obstinate, yet seeing Naples threatened, France withdrawn, and the preliminaries accepted by Great Britain and Holland, she A.D. 1736. • finally gave in, and on the thirtieth of January 1736 signified her intention to fulfil those conditions which affected her. Many difficulties still remained, principally arising from the Duke of Lorraine's reluctance to quit his native country and family dominions; but his marriage with Maria Theresa on the twelfth of February 1736 cleared away every obstacle to the conclusion of peace, and after a formal renunciation of that duchy the allodial possessions were exchanged for those of the Medici, guaranteed by France and Austria. Thus was he also sacrificed to a reckless self-interested policy; compelled to abandon an independent jurisdiction which his family had enjoyed for six hundred years, and retire into private life merely to suit the convenience of two conflicting powers! For this he had only the expectation of an equivalent which any slight change in European politics might at a moment destroy, or the prolonged existence of Gaston indefinitely postpone. Florence meanwhile bemoaned the fate of prince and people and burned with indignation at the villany of its authors. John Gaston had injured nobody; he was fast sinking under accumulated woe and the harpy-screams that encompassed him: weakened in mind and body and plunged in the deepest melancholy, he allowed

his ministers to regulate the government at their will. Already had he resigned the distribution of places and pardons to their care, and corruption knew no bounds; everything became venal; the court, the tribunals, the public offices; all the state departments were filled with those who having purchased their situations determined to reimburse themselves a hundred-fold: incipient abuses became customs, old evils more inveterate, and men's minds, already habituated to the perversion of what was meant for public good to selfish and private interests, gradually moulded their morality to the pressure of the time, and its standard was universally lowered. Partiality usurped the seat of justice, the social ties were everywhere loosened, and the reign of anarchy seemed almost upon the point of being acknowledged throughout the land! The few who attempted to stem this torrent were accused of disloyalty by the cunning of parasites, acting on royal weakness; they were artfully identified with the Electress Palatine, whom Gaston still hated though he advocated her cause; their efforts were vain, their patience gone, and they finally resigned themselves to the fate of Tuscany under a few courtly minions and the talons of foreign injustice. After many difficulties

A.D. 1737.

it was settled that Stanislaus should take possession of the Duchy of Lorraine the moment Tuscany was occupied by Austrian soldiers, which occurred in the commencement of 1737 when Count Kevenuller sent General Braitwitz to inform Gaston of their arrival and General Wachtendonk took the oath of allegiance before Marquis Giuliano Capponi governor of Leghorn. Thus did the long-disputed independence of Tuscany receive its final blow: the act of investiture was signed on the twenty-seventh of January 1737 by which that province was given to Charles Duke of Lorraine and his male heirs, after which to Charles Prince of Lorraine and his descendants of both sexes: all the Medician property and dominions were to pass into the new dynasty under a single title, so as to reduce the various

ties of Siena and other fiefs into one homogeneous state. Only the family convention now remained to be settled between the houses of Lorraine and Medici ; but from the Spanish pretensions to the allodial possessions and other causes, the negotiations flagged, so that Prince de Craon was despatched from Vienna to Florence for their final arrangement. His labour was spared, for Gaston after hearing his arguments felt too much afraid of Spain, and altogether too ill to come to any decision, or even attend to public business : both gout and stone were unusually busy with his frame after the commencement of winter ; his stomach too began to give way, and at the entrance of summer a fever with tumefaction of the whole frame supervened, of which he expired on the ninth of July 1737 in the sixty-sixth year of his age and the fourteenth of his reign. The Prince of Craon at once seized the government in the name of Duke Francis of Lorraine, now Grand Duke of Tuscany, and received the homage of all orders of the state : the deceased sovereign was interred with the accustomed ceremonies and the Electress treated with that respect due to her high rank and misfortunes. No act of authority was yet exercised over the hereditary estates or personal effects of the Medici ; but negotiations about the former were renewed with that princess who appointed a minister to arrange the business at Vienna, Padre Ascanio at the same time declaring on the part of Spain that such convention would be deemed an act of hostility, while France, with outward indifference, secretly assured the Electress that she would be supported in any act of opposition to the new sovereign. Notwithstanding this, an agreement was signed on the thirty-first of October at Vienna by which all the moveable property such as statues, pictures, jewels, books, and other precious articles were made over to Francis II. and his successors as state property for public benefit and the attraction of foreign visitors : none could be removed from the Grand Duchy, and all the allodial estates were, at her

death, to become the new sovereign's property as compensation for what he had resigned in Lorraine. The debts of the late dynasty devolved on Francis along with its property; public credit was to be maintained, and an annuity of 40,000 crowns settled on the Electress: in the sovereign's absence she was to be Regentess, and even if he were present every attention was to be paid to her opinions and recommendations in state affairs. After this final and merely nominal act of the last Medici, the Electress Anne lived for six years in nearly absolute retirement, and then died of a dropsy on the eighteenth of February 1743 in the seventy-sixth year of her age, but without causing any regret beyond what may be supposed to have been felt in such a moment at the extinction of an ancient and long celebrated race.

Thus ended the Medician dynasty which either as citizen or sovereign had ruled the Florentines for more than three hundred years: its power, founded on the wealth prudence and sagacity of Giovanni di Bicci, was consolidated by his more able and ambitious son, and extended at home and abroad by the brilliant talents of Lorenzo. The exaltation of Leo and Clement to pontifical authority strengthened their hold on Florence and Liberty withered in their grasp. Charles V. for his own ends used the worst enemies of freedom to crush the sinking commonwealth, and exalted a tyrant who would have disgraced the deadliest epochs of Roman villany. His fall was just, but the assassin, while striking in the name of liberty, betrayed the man that trusted him: conscious of demerit he dared not to rouse the people by a name so sacred, which he had neither the dignity nor the virtue to support; for Lorenzino also was a Medici! The bold and bloody but sagacious Cosimo next trampled on Florentine liberty and amidst universal execration maintained a tyrant-throne. No time, distance, or country secured his victims from the silent vengeance of Francis, and his court was the den of murder licentiousness and crime. Ferdinand ruled

dexterously, if not ably, and improved the nation, but allowed early ecclesiastical habits to dim his judgment and lower the sovereign dignity, wherefore priestly cunning tainted civil jurisdiction and bred confusion in Tuscany. Cosimo II. ruled well and evenly for a Medici but without his father's ability, and the second Ferdinand beginning in troubles and ferocity, finished in peace and moderation, amidst science learning and philosophy. On his memory the persecution of Galileo will ever be a stain, but scarcely perceptible in the leopard character of a Medici. Pride vanity cruelty weakness and bigotry filled the mind of his gloomy successor and all Tuscany was blighted. Gaston, the child of science and literature, the pupil of Noris, Redi, and other superior minds, was driven to misfortune by paternal oppression and to vice by domestic misery: with a head and heart to govern he smothered reason in debauchery, plunged deep into those swamps of sensuality from which even the brute creation instinctively revolts, and thus destroyed a character that might have preserved his country. Old and tormented, Giovan-Gastone ceased to be the generous protector of all that is beautiful in genius, in art, in science and in literature; he shrunk timid and disgusted, from the world, his people, and himself; buried in the depths of his palace he was only known to exist through the insolent wickedness of his satellites, and died, perhaps regretted, certainly pitied, but still unhonoured.

Like Augustus the Medici gave their name to the Florentine age of art, literature, and science; an inherent taste and princely munificence in promoting these, cast a glory over the race which dazzles, and hides their vices from the world. There are perhaps few historical examples of a single family producing such a succession of crime and talent, unredeemed by any solid virtue: rich, splendid, and imposing, they caught the applause of Europe by exalting themselves on the personal interests of their own countrymen: each individual while re-

ceiving their bounty shared their magnificence and identified himself with their fame, but in so doing found himself entangled in a silken web of obligation that he had neither the power nor inclination to destroy. Immense riches, expended with a long-sighted sagacity and the most artful prudence, corrupted the citizens and endeared the corrupters, while the convenience of their protection undermined liberty, which Florence was generally spared the trouble of exercising, except at the nod of her patrons.

The Augustine age of Florentine genius was not produced by the Medici, though promoted and encouraged by them all ; Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo Buonarroti, Massaccio, Cellini, Andrea del Sarto and many others were free citizens ; and even Cosimo, Piero, Lorenzo, Leo X., and Pope Clement VII. were the offspring of republican Florence. Dante the glory of his age and country, or rather of modern times, for great men belong to all mankind, and the witty and elegant Boccaccio sprang from a free community ; even the melody of Petrarca came sweeping through the solitudes of Vacluse in echoes from republican Arno, and the fire of his more angry Muse burns with the untamed spirit of her origin. Poliziano, and the great Lorenzo himself, at once the patron and pupil of literature, were the children of republican liberty : the Ghiberti, the Brunelleschi, the Giotti, Donatelli and Michelozzi were all buoyant with republican energy long before Florence dreamed of such a misfortune as monarchy. The Medici on their exaltation had the merit of never checking these fruits of more liberal institutions : all political freedom that could be safely put down was crushed without scruple, but a free spirit was still allowed to animate science art and literature : it was even encouraged ; for besides their strong natural taste for all those arts that are supposed to improve man, they knew it would throw a splendour over the name sufficient to hide much crime from the superficial view of posterity without endanger-

ing their existing power. Still under the first Cosimo and his son almost every able or celebrated Florentine was of republican habits and origin, even Guicciardini himself, one of the basest betrayers of his country's freedom, sprang from the mother whom he sacrificed, and Macchiavelli after suffering for her sake was spared the melancholy sight of her total destruction.

The Augustine age of Italy was also that of excessive vice, of cruelty, of oppression treachery and assassination, and the Medici were conspicuous in all. It is averred that literature and the arts civilize and soften human nature, and they may do so by reaction; but they are the effect, not the cause, of civilization—the offspring of a few bright spirits that outstrip the general movement and strike back their influence upon it. In Florence the impetus was given ere republican virtue became entirely spent and when civilization was fast increasing; but the source of this last should rather be sought in the reaction of national freedom through a sagacious, and for the times, a well-administered government. There is also a higher power than these that regenerates man, a power too obvious to every well-constituted mind for consideration here but to which for eighteen hundred years the world has been mainly indebted for its present state of mildness and moral refinement; a power too whose influence is felt, though its source may be too often lost sight of and philosophy invested with its spoils.

We must not however regard the vices of those times through the more chastened medium of the present: morality was then theoretically known, applauded if not admired, and frequently practised*; but crime was real, active, and habitual; not from wantonness, but to second ambition and individual interests. Success always justified the means, and what would now be contemplated with horror was then beheld unmoved: everything

* Vide Agnolo Pandolfini. “*Del Governo della Famiglia*,” passim.

both public and private was a conflict of wits, in which honour and honesty had but little part; cunning and deceit much: he that struck hardest and parried quickest was applauded most and never lacked seconders. It was a low scale of morality; but it belonged to the age and should therefore be handled less roughly in our estimate of character. Things, now most properly condemned were then matters of course; wherefore to be just we must translate ourselves into the turbulence of those times, identify ourselves in some manner with the prevailing opinions, and give judgment accordingly.

We now have done with the Medici; a new dynasty, a new and a better era breaks on Tuscany; and though liberty still remains dormant, a milder form of absolute government has at least contributed to make the great mass of the people comfortable, perhaps positively happy, as far as such a state is compatible with sublunary existence and the inherent nature of mankind.

COTEMPORARY MONARCHS.—England: George I. until 1727; George II.—France: Louis XV.—Spain: Philip V., abdicates in 1724 in favour of his son Don Louis, after whose death he resumed the government.—Portugal: John V. until 1750.—Naples and Sicily: Austria until 1734; then Don Carlos of Spain as Charles.—Sardinia: Victor Amadeus until 1730, abdicated; Charles Emanuel.—Popes: Clement XI. until 1721; Innocent XIII. until 1724; Benedict XIII. until 1730; Clement XII. (Corsini of Florence).—Charles VI. Emperor.—Russia: Peter the Great (Alexievitch) until 1725; Catherine I. until 1727; Peter II. until 1730; Anne I. until 1740; then Iwan III. and Elizabeth I.—Poland: Augustus II. until 1733; then Augustus III.—Prussia: Frederic-William I.—Sweden: Ulrica Eleonora (wife of Frederic of Hesse Cassel); Prince Eugene of Savoy, died in 1736.

END OF VOL. V. AND BOOK III.

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